

E. Stanley
Jones

CONVERSION

What is conversion?

How does it come about?

What are its lasting effects?

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CONVERSION

E. STANLEY JONES



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CONVERSION

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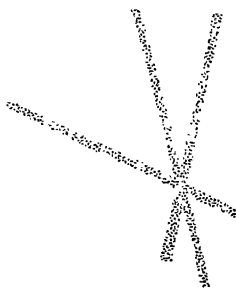
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PREFACE



One of the great men of India, Srinavasa Shastri, perhaps after Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru, the greatest man of modern India, was asked by me: "Mr. Shastri, do you share the skepticism of Poona?" Poona City and environs is the most skeptical portion of India. He replied: "I'm not religious, but I'm not irreligious. Religion is not real to me. I wish it were. I have no divine spark to give to the Servants of India Society, of which I am the head. My heart is ashes. Now religion seems real to you. How did it become real?" I told him of my conversion. When I finished, he thoughtfully said: "I see what I need. I need conversion. Either I must find conversion for myself, or else I must warm up my heart against somebody's heart who has been converted."

This revelation by a great and noble Hindu is an uncovering of the soul of modern man in East and West. The soul of modern man is depicted by Jesus when He said that the unclean

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spirit left a man and when he returned he found it "swept and garnished"—and "empty." Modern man's soul is swept of many a superstition, garnished with many bits of scientific knowledge and with scientific gadgets and conveniences, but empty of any real way of life. He knows everything about life except how to live it. He is filled with mental confusion and spiritual chaos. He is empty of a positive way of life. He needs conversion.

This same Mr. Shastri, presiding over one of my addresses to non-Christians and Christians, said in his introduction: "We always know where Stanley Jones is coming out. If he begins at the binomial theorem he will come out at the place of conversion."

Two things stand out in these statements of Mr. Shastri:

1. Modern man, even at his highest and noblest, is for the most part empty. The old is gone and the new has not yet been born.
2. The inevitability of conversion. Begin where you will with this business called life—even at the binomial theorem—and you will come out at the place of the necessity of conversion. What man, not Eastern man or Western man but man as man, needs is conversion.

In these two things is found the thesis of this book. Modern man is empty and needs conversion. Conversion is inevitable.

The urgency for conversion is to be found in the speed at which life is going to construction or chaos. All the old time-tables are out of date. When my grandson Stanley was asked at three years of age what he wanted to be when he grew up, he replied without hesitation: "I want to be a chimpanzee and sit up in a tree and eat bananas." At six, when asked what he wanted to be, he replied just as unhesitatingly: "I want to be a space man. I want to find out what is out there in space." From chimpanzee to space man in three years marks the speed at which modern life is advancing. The difficulty is that the space man with all his intelligence still has the soul of a chimpanzee. He is handling vast forces with great intelligence, but he is

morally and spiritually unfit to handle those forces. The space man has thrown away the banana and is now chewing on sticks of dynamite. He may blow himself and our civilization to pieces. He needs conversion.

We are growingly sure that conversion is necessary, but is another book on conversion needed? We have had some great books on conversion; for instance, George Jackson's *The Fact of Conversion*, and Harold Begbie's, *Twice-born Men*. But Jackson's book was written with the background of more than a generation ago. That background has now changed—one is almost tempted to say, completely changed. The basic needs are the same, but changing environmental factors bring out areas of need undreamed of a generation or two ago. What we thought were securities in days gone by have been dissolved, not only in the acids of modern thinking but also in the acids of modern fact, for instance, the discovery of nuclear energy. Modern man feels stripped, naked, alone, bereft of cosmic support. Has conversion any relevancy for him?

Begbie's book was the story of the conversions of the down-and-outs, the people on skid-row. And a glorious story it is! But while that area of need is still there, the need for conversion has moved up into so-called respectability—among the up-and-outs. The need is just as great and in some ways greater among this class than among those in obvious need. For behind this façade of respectability are going on conflicts and fears and just sheer emptiness which is appalling. Modern man wouldn't live with God; now he can't live with himself. The doctors' offices are filled with disrupted people who are passing on the sicknesses of their minds and their souls to their bodies. The psychiatrists' offices even more so, very often including the psychiatrist himself. Said a prominent surgeon: "That psychiatrist is the only really integrated psychiatrist I've ever seen." That is an overstatement, of course. But the man described collapsed and ended in a breakdown and a sanatorium

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when the religious experience which had sustained him collapsed. Pagan psychiatry is showing itself more and more inadequate to deal with the disrupted in any thoroughgoing and lasting way. The Christian psychiatrists are doing better.

When we turn to professional social workers we find very often a professionalism dealing with persons and trying to heal through that professionalism. It fails. I spoke to about five hundred professional social workers and when I said, "Aren't you problems dealing with problems?" they laughed as much as to say, "How did you find us out?" It was easy; their faces showed conflict rather than composure. You could see that they belonged to the disease rather than to the cure. The average length of service of the professional social worker is about seven years. Their motivation and their resources, unless sustained by religious experience, run out as they face appalling human need day by day. So they give up and turn to something else. They lose the battle at the place of their own resources. Knowledge they have; inner resources they do not have.

When we turn to the church we find the situation better. For the church with all its faults is the greatest serving institution on earth. It has many critics, but no rivals in the work of human redemption. It has a sustained motivation and power that keeps it going in the face of opposition and indifference and lack of appreciation. I picked up my newspaper in India and the headlines said, "Need of the Missionary Spirit." And this was from the Communist mayor of a large Indian city. At the inauguration of a Kshatriya (Hindu) college, the president said: "We must make this a real Christian college." A Hindu governor of an Indian state said to a Hindu doctor in charge of a leper sanatorium: "You are doing a real bit of Christian service here." I repeat, the Church has many critics but no rivals in the work of human redemption. But—and that "but" is a big one—and important! For about one third of the membership of the churches is responsible for this redemp-

tive thrust into the soul of humanity. The rest are going along for a ride. I have often said to congregations at home and abroad: "This audience can probably be divided into three classes—an inner circle to whom religion is firsthand, vital, and life changing. It gives goal and power to move on to that goal. It cleanses the guilt of the past, gives adequate resources for the present, and gives confidence in the future. It makes life add up to sense and meaning and value. God is not a name but a living reality. They call Jesus a Savior, for He saves them now—from sin and from what they don't want to be to what they want to be. It looses their love upon human need, gives them a joy, unspeakable and full of glory, and an abiding peace which remains amid the flux of circumstances. Their conversion is real, and it is working.

"Around this inner circle is the second group to whom religion is not firsthand but secondhand. They get their faith from their surroundings—from books, from services, from relatives, from social custom. Take these things away and they collapse. For instance, why is it that in America, while the average percentage of the people who belong to the churches is 62 per cent in the country as a whole, the average on the West Coast is 24 per cent? The answer is simple. The people from the East and Middle West migrating to the West Coast had, in many cases, a secondhand type of faith. When the environmental factors which sustained their faith were taken away, they did not have enough firsthand contact with God to sustain the strain of transplantation so they dropped away. A little more than one out of three had what it takes spiritually. This secondhand group didn't have what it takes. They believe in God but don't know Him. They stumble from event to event in half-lights without guidance. They feel frustrated and empty. A banker went blind; he was a member of a church, but his religion was all secondhand. So he was frustrated. He told me he was like a cartoon he had seen of a monkey riding on the

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back of a dog holding a piece of meat at the end of a stick just in front of the dog's nose. The dog was worn out. So he too, he said, was worn out in his searching for God, but never finding. This second group is a frustrated, dissatisfied group.

"The third group is further removed from reality. They have no faith, first or secondhand. But they stay within the church—completely empty. Someone has facetiously said, 'The church is filled with empty people.' This is overstated but has enough truth in it to make it sting. It is certainly true of this third group, and it is serious. For when God goes, goal goes; when goal goes, meaning goes; when meaning goes, value goes. Then life turns dead on their hands. They live as dead souls in a dead universe—and yet are compelled to live outwardly."

So within the church only about one third of the people know what conversion is in any vital way. The other two thirds need conversion.

In this two thirds who need conversion are to be found pastors, Sunday-school teachers, official members—and bishops. The Metropolitan of India, the head bishop of his denomination, said in one of my meetings, "Life for me began at seventy-two." Up to seventy-two he was a respectable, moral, devoted ecclesiast, but unconverted. The next ten years of his life were fruitful beyond measure—more fruitful than the previous seventy-two. Another bishop of another denomination said after retirement, "I'm empty and frustrated." Taken out of the limelight and from being at the center of things he found he had nothing to sustain him. He needed conversion.

In our Ashrams of East and West, places of spiritual retreat, we begin with what we call "The Morning of the Open Heart," in which we tell our needs. We ask: "Why have you come? What do you want? What do you really need?" We tell them that they don't have to tell their needs, and they will not be out of the fellowship if they do not tell, but that they will be poorer

and so will we if they do not tell. Moreover, we remind them that if they act as though they have no needs, then we know they have most of all. They have the need of seeing and confessing their needs. So we find them gladly expressing their needs in a fellowship of confidence. We give four or five hours to this catharsis. The reaction of one member, who listened to it for the first time, was: "Good gracious, have we all the disrupted people in the country here?" My reply was: "No, you have a cross section of the church life honestly revealed." In the ordinary church it is suppressed by respectability, by a desire to appear better than we really are. Here in the Ashrams we have learned to be simple and honest and real. But wait till the last day, "The Morning of the Overflowing Heart," and you will think you will have all the transformed people of the country here. For 95 to 98 per cent will go away transformed and radiant—converted!

In this Preface, we seem to have slanted the need of conversion toward the respectable—beginning with a highly respectable Hindu and ending with the rank and file of church members and church leaders. Have we swung away from the needs of the down-and-out? No, this book will be filled with cases of conversion of the down-and-outs as well as the cases of the up-and-outs and all shades between, including teen-agers and children. A teen-ager, bubbling with joy over a new-found experience of conversion, said to me recently: "Won't you write a book for teen-agers?" I replied: "I'm not certain I can. That takes brains! But I will slant my next book—the book on conversion—toward teen-agers." She went away satisfied by that slanting.

This book is slanted toward the human need for conversion wherever that need is found—inside the church and outside the church, the respectable and the rotten, the Christian and the non-Christian, the young and the old, the intellectual and

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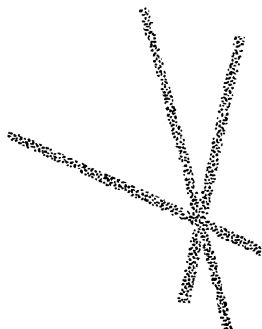
the nonintellectual, the moral and the immoral—it is pointed toward human need and that need is universal.

These cases of conversions and these observations about them and deductions from them have been gathered from almost every country and class in the world during an evangelistic ministry of over fifty years. So this is not abstract discussion about conversion and its theoretical need—it is a revelation of how it works wonders in changed human lives in all climes and all classes and all races. The range will be from intellectuals, millionaires, and diplomats to cannibals in Africa and all types between. This fact of conversion, added up over the whole range of living, opens an amazing possibility. We are not destined by heredity, by environment, by habit, by our subconscious, or by our past to remain what we are. We can be changed, converted, here and now at any age, with any background, in any environment, and with however a messed-up past and however a mixed-up present. God has an answer and that answer is the offer of conversion.

A woman said, in the “Hour of the Open Heart”: “I am about to jell into the kind of a person I don’t want to be.” Some have already jelled, some are about to jell, and some are in danger of jelling. But no one need remain what he is, or is about to be, for the door to change is open—conversion. And no person and no thing can keep you from entering that door—except your own refusal to enter. Conversion is God’s answer to man’s need.

E. STANLEY JONES

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THE NECESSITY OF CONVERSION

We divide humanity into many classes—white and colored, rich and poor, educated and uneducated, Americans and non-Americans, East and West. The modern Japanese youth divide people into “wet” and “dry”—the “wet” are those who observe customs and morality and the “dry” are those who do as they like! But Jesus drew a line down through all these distinctions and divided humanity into just two classes—the unconverted and the converted, the once-born and the twice-born. All men live on one side or the other of that line. No other division matters—this is a division that divides; it is a division that runs through time and eternity.

“Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” “Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye cannot enter the kingdom of heaven.” (K.J.V.)

What did Jesus mean by being “born again” and being “converted”? Obviously He meant something very, very important, for having it or not having it divided men—all men—

for time and eternity. We will take up in another chapter an exposition of conversion and the new birth. Before we go on we must clear a confusion in many minds between proselytism and conversion. They are the same for many people, but nothing could be further from the thought of Jesus than to make them one—He rejected one and insisted on the other. He said to the religious leaders of that day: "You traverse sea and land to make a single proselyte, and when he becomes a proselyte you make him twice as much a child of hell as yourselves." He rejected this scramble for numbers which only added to their collective egotism—an essentially irreligious process. For proselytism is a change from one group to another without any necessary change in character and life. It is a change of label, but not of life. Conversion, on the other hand, is a change in character and life followed by an outer change of allegiance corresponding to that inner change. A Hindu said to me one day: "I'll become baptized if you give me twenty thousand rupees and a good job." I replied: "My brother, if you should lay down twenty thousand rupees at my feet and say, 'Please baptize me,' I would refuse it—and you!" Proselytism and conversion are poles apart, and to confuse them is to degrade the most precious thing that life holds—conversion. It is to confuse love and lust, beauty and ugliness, life and death.

Moreover, to confuse being converted with being inside the church and being unconverted with being outside the church is to fall into the same fatal error. For Jesus urged this necessity of being born again upon Nicodemus, a highly respectable religious "teacher of Israel." Why did He say this straight off: "You must be born again"? The reason obviously was that He saw Nicodemus steal in at night, looking this way and that way before he entered, afraid of what people would say about his coming to see this young disturber of the *status quo*. Nicodemus was herd-centered instead of God-centered. Some are self-centered, some herd-centered, and some are God-centered.

Nicodemus belonged to a combination of the first two, not to the last. So Jesus had gently to put him on the side of those who do not see the kingdom of God.

But was this an arbitrary division imposed on life—imposed by a Gentle Fanatic? Or did Jesus not impose something on life, but expose something out of life? Does life too say: "You must be born again," and "Except you be converted you cannot enter the kingdom of God"? Is life rendering the same verdict that Jesus pronounced two thousand years ago? And with increasing insistence and urgency? Listen in to what is revealed in doctors' offices where the disrupted are passing on the illness of their minds and souls to their bodies; to what the patients on psychiatrists' couches are saying as they reveal their mental and emotional and spiritual tangles; to what lies back of a façade of respectability in homes where marital conflicts cause people to teeter on the verge of breakdown and breakup; to what management and labor are saying as their strained relations harden into sullen hostility or open conflict; to what parents and children say as unconverted parents are irritated to distraction at seeing their children practicing their own sins; to what self-centered and egotistical national representatives are unconsciously saying as they stumble from failure to failure to find agreements—agreements which affect the destiny of us all; to what many a heart filled with the sheer boredom and emptiness of life is saying silently; to what the conscience is saying as it is gnawed at night and day by a sense of estrangement through guilt. Listen to life as is. And you will hear in an increasing crescendo, "You must be born again. . . . Except you be converted you cannot live now or hereafter."

The whole of life is a commentary on what I've just said. Do we need to call the roll of witnesses to the fact that life breaks down without conversion?

Here is what H. G. Wells wrote shortly before his death:

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A frightful queerness has come into life. Hitherto events have been held together by a certain logical consistency as the heavenly bodies have been held together by the golden cord of gravitation. Now it is as if that cord had vanished and everything is driven anyhow, anywhere, at a steadily increasing velocity. The writer is convinced that there is no way out or around, or through the impasse. It is the end.

Here was a great mind, without an inner sustaining conversion, up against a blank wall of futility—"It is the end." But that end, through conversion, could turn into a beginning. As it has for many—as many as have tried it.

Said one of the greatest statesmen of our time to me: "I'm fed up." His patriotism and his devotion, without conversion, had run their course and were not sufficient to sustain him. Another great statesman said just recently to me: "We've reached bottom." Life without conversion had no sustaining hope. Another in high office said: "My religion and my philosophy have let me down. So I hate my work, and I hate life." His "religion" and his "philosophy" did not provide for conversion, so they let him down.

A Japanese governor introduced me in these words: "I'm a man here tonight without a faith. I wish I had a faith. I envy those of you who do have a faith. But I'm a lost sheep. I've come here tonight to gain a faith if possible through the speaker. And I hope you will gain one too." And he was a trustee of a Buddhist temple.

A Japanese doctor told me that tuberculosis had been ousted as Killer Number One in Japan in favor of heart disease and high blood pressure. When I asked him the cause, he replied, "Spiritual uneasiness." At the close of the war the philosophy of a great people had collapsed—they were not a divine people with a divine emperor who had a divine destiny to rule. That conception of life went down in blood and ruin and left a

vacuum. So this sense of vacuum has sent up the blood pressure of a whole nation.

Carl Jung, the great psychiatrist, said: "The central neurosis of our time is emptiness." Human nature simply can't stand emptiness and meaninglessness. It gets jumpy, jittery, goes to pieces.

The tragic thing is that this sense of meaninglessness has become a characteristic of our modern climate. Professor W. T. Stace of Princeton University said: "It is the essence of the modern mind that the universe is meaningless and purposeless." The modern mind has given us knowledge and conveniences—and emptiness!

An undergraduate of one of our great universities told Sam Shoemaker: "I don't know what is the matter with me, but I feel lost." Dr. Shoemaker quoted that remark to a number of his contemporaries and about nine out of ten replied: "That's me."

That sense of lostness has produced a sense of cynicism and a lack of faith in anything or any person. A young man asked a professor of history: "What's your racket?" The professor replied that he was a professor of history, and then asked: "Aren't you interested in history?" "Naw," he replied: "I'm willing to let bygones be bygones." He was not interested in anything, for nothing gave a basic meaning and goal to life. He needed conversion.

Leigh Hunt, speaking of Napoleon's final weeks when he escaped from Elba and made his stand at Waterloo, wrote: "No great principle stood by him." That is at the bottom of the sense of lostness in the soul of modern man. No great principle stands by them. They feel orphaned, estranged, alone—terribly alone. An atheist has been defined as "a man who has no invisible means of support." But many who would not want to be called atheists have that same sense of lacking

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invisible support. They go down under the pressure of circumstances, for they have no invisible means of support.

I saw a man stagger through a railway station in Japan with a huge carton on his bent back. On the carton were the words, "The Universe." An individual bent under the weight of the universe! That graphically describes what has happened to the individual. Through books, newspapers, radio, and television the "universe" and its troubles are daily laid on the back of staggering individuals. In addition he has to bear his own individual burdens within his heart. Without a sustaining conversion no wonder so many crack up under it.

In India a man spoke to Rotary for an hour on "Nothing." For this Nothingness, sunyavadi, has been built up into a philosophy. Having nothing to sustain them, they capitalize it and take refuge in nothingness. So the empty take refuge in emptiness, but you cannot change emptiness into fullness by capitalizing it. Emptiness has to be changed into fullness by conversion. An Indian Christian said of a certain man, "He is suffering from nothingness." Many do.

A pastor's brilliant son, a personnel man in a great corporation, told his father: "I'm trying hard to be an atheist, but I'm having a time of it!" He and his nurse wife are each spending forty dollars a week with the same psychiatrist. Conversion would take their feet out of this fly-paper of self-preoccupation and send them on their way rejoicing because they would be released.

A sister told of her brother, who does not go to church, that he had said: "I don't need the money, but I work just to run away from myself." His wife added: "I work to keep from committing suicide." Conversion would put back meaning and value and goal to life. They muddle through without it.

Sir Thomas Salt, inventor of Alpaca and founder of Saltaire, heard a preacher say he saw a caterpillar crawl up a painted stick in search of a juicy twig only to have to retrace his steps.

There are the painted sticks of pleasure, wealth, power, and fame. Men climb them only to have to retrace their steps. The next day the baronet visited the preacher and said: "I have been climbing those painted sticks. I'm a weary man. Is there rest for a weary millionaire?" He found rest and release through the words of Jesus: "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." (Matt. 11:28, K.J.V.) Conversion turned weariness into worthwhileness.

A Hindu atheist said to me: "I'm like a broken radio receiving set trying to get the wave length." An inquirer came in just after I had my talk with the atheist, and I called him back and asked if he wouldn't interpret for me as I talked to this inquirer in a language I didn't know. He gladly assented. An atheist interpreting the Christian message to an inquirer! He did it enthusiastically, adding emphasis to my points. For the first time in his life he came in contact with something positive, something hopeful, something constructive. He was only a transmitter, but the feel of it was good. The finding of it would be what he was really wanting, amid all his atheism.

What shall we say of those who take refuge in narcotics? It's an escape out of futility. I talked to an alcoholic. I felt he was agreeing with me about everything so I suggested that we get down on our knees, thinking he would gladly lay his troubled life at the feet of Christ. But he stiffened, sat bolt upright, and said between clenched teeth: "I'll be damned if I do." So I prayed without him. When I was interrupted by a noise I opened my eyes and saw that he had slipped out into the bathroom to get a swig of liquor to sustain him through the ordeal of resisting salvation. He had always turned to liquor as the way out, and in the greatest crisis of his life he turned to it again. He wanted a refuge from salvation! Later on his deathbed he turned feebly to God, surrendering his ruined life to save his ruined soul. And the love that had followed him all the years

embraced him and bade heaven rejoice. Conversion would have saved his life as well as his soul.

In a city were two signs side by side. "Go to Church. Find strength for your life." Next to it was: "Where there's life there's Budweiser." These two signs represent two approaches to life—one is from the inward to the outward; the other is the outward to the inward. One depends on inward salvation from guilt and fear and conflict; the other depends on outward stimulants—pick-me-ups that let you down. The increase in narcotic consumption and tranquilizers is the outer symptom of a deep need for conversion. It is the pagan substitute for conversion—with pathetic results.

When we turn to the philosophers and psychiatrists and writers and novelists we hear the same sense of inadequacy, often deepening into despair.

Dr. William E. Hocking, Harvard philosopher, said at the Jerusalem Conference that man brings himself up to a certain place and then finds he hasn't the resources to complete himself. He must be completed from without, by something beyond himself. I held my breath waiting to see whether he would say the word. But he didn't. At the close I said: "Dr. Hocking, why didn't you say the word?" "What word?" he asked. I replied: "When you said man hasn't enough resources to complete himself, but must be completed by something outside himself, why didn't you say, 'Conversion, new birth, born from above?'" He thoughtfully replied: "I'm a philosopher, I can't say the word; you are a missionary and an evangelist, you can say the word." "But," I replied: "I'm not willing for you to turn it over to me; if you see it, you should say it." Whether through implication or by revealing silences philosophy does say the word—it points to the need of conversion, of being born from above.

Listen to this despairing word from an Eastern philosopher: "A blind turtle and an ox yoke are floating on a vast ocean, and

the turtle has as much chance of putting his head through that yoke as you have of being reborn as a man and not an animal." A Western philosopher, Bertrand Russell, is of the same mood when he suggests as the remedy "an unyielding despair."

Men respond to these philosophers of despair, for it represents their own mood. "Who then speaks most powerfully to and for the men of this generation? Those poets, artists, and philosophers who preach despair and sing of bleak encounter with silence and futility and nonbeing."¹

These writers can say:

In my nostrils there is the odor
Of Death and Dissolution;

but only the Christian faith with its belief in conversion can end by saying:

But there is also the fragrance
Of an Eternal Spring.²

When we turn to pagan psychiatry we find that same sense of final futility—man hasn't enough resources in himself to complete himself. In establishing a Christian psychiatric center, Nurmanzil Psychiatric Center, Lucknow, India, we defined the relationship of Christianity and psychiatry thus: "Psychiatry carried on under Christian auspices and with the Christian motive and spirit has as its aim to help the patient to become mentally and emotionally sufficiently foot-loose to make an intelligent surrender of himself to God; and to provide techniques to develop the new life." The end of the whole process is to get the patient off his own hands into the hands of God, for the basic cause of his mental and emotional upset

¹ Julian N. Hartt, *Toward a Theology of Evangelism* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1955), p. 15.

² *Ibid.*, p. 24.

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is self-centered preoccupation. Pagan psychiatry has no way of getting that release, for it has no purpose or method of self-surrender to God. The patient is supposed to be cured by self-knowledge—a fallacy. If the self-knowledge doesn't lead him to self-surrender to God then it leaves him turning round on himself, which is the disease itself, however filled with knowledge it may be. The high priest of pagan psychiatry, Freud, said, "In our view the truth of religion may be altogether disregarded. . . . Dark, unfeeling, and unloving powers determine human destiny." I would suspect a premise which brought me to the conclusion that "dark, unfeeling, and unloving powers determine human destiny," for if I believe that, then it cuts the nerve of my faith in the possibility of human nature's being changed. Conversion is ruled out, and with conversion ruled out there is nothing to do but to sink back into the fatalities of unfeeling and unloving forces residing in the subconscious.

A psychiatrist called up a friend of mine, a minister, and asked: "Can you help me? These patients hang on my belt as though I were God. They call me up at two, three, or four o'clock in the morning to talk with me. It's getting on my nerves. I can't stand it." The minister suggested the book *The Way*. The psychiatrist read seven pages and was converted, then and there—gloriously converted. He told the pastor that he had been charging fifty dollars an hour for treatment, and he also added that often when patients were about to be discharged he would raise another issue and string them out—at fifty dollars an hour! After his conversion he cut his prices to eight dollars an hour and did a lot of free work. He became tremendously excited over this matter of Christianity. A new possibility opened up before him and his patients—conversion. The fatalism of being in the grip of dark, unfeeling, and unloving powers was broken—broken by conversion, a conversion that brought him into saving contact with the power of light and love and life. No wonder a leading psychologist told Bryan Green: "I

need a religious experience myself for my patients need it, and I can't give it to them unless I have it myself." Another psychologist said, "I always send my patients to the church, for there the forgiveness of sins is preached." A psychiatrist who dealt with the disrupted of Hollywood at high fees said, "All these patients of mine need is a mourner's bench."

These pointed words by Dr. Henry Sloane Coffin sum up the trend:

Current psychology adds to these moral alibis. Men and women have themselves analyzed, and find emancipation in banishing the ugly names which vigorous religion attached to sins, where these are re-christened with labels with no suggestion of guilt. They are maladjusted, or introverted, rather than dishonest or selfish. A middle aged father tires of his wife and becomes involved with a young woman half his age, and is told by a practitioner that he is suffering from "a spasm of re-adolescence," when he ought to be struck in the face with "Thou shalt not commit adultery." *

When we turn to the scientists, we find ourselves smiling a wry smile at the statement of Adam Smith in the beginning days of modern science: "Science is the great antidote to the poison of enthusiasm and superstition. When we have learned to make sensible use of science the world will not be filled with war, ignorance, prejudice, superstition and fear." We smile especially at those last two words "and fear"! At this very moment we are in the grip of a world fear brought on by the creation of atomic bombs by science. Some of the makers of the atomic bombs called together the ministers around Chicago and in a two days' conference announced: "Frankly, we're frightened. We can produce the means in atomic energy, but we can't produce the ends for which those means are to be

* Henry Sloane Coffin, *Joy in Believing* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1956), p. 96. Used by permission.

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used. Unless you ministers can produce the moral and spiritual ends for which atomic energy is to be used, then we're sunk." Science turned to religion and cried, "Save us or we perish." And they meant it; for they saw that unless a conversion—individual and collective—which would turn atomic energy from destruction to construction took place we would be sunk, literally sunk. The need is simple and profound—conversion!

The founder of American behaviorism, Dr. John B. Watson, tells us: "We need nothing to explain human behavior but the ordinary laws of physics and chemistry." I am reminded of saying to Dr. George Carver, the great Negro saint and scientist, that a professor of chemistry had said to me that life was no more than a flaring up of a flame from the combustion of chemical elements. The great chemist shook his head and said: "The poor man, the poor man!" That was all! And it was enough. For anyone who holds that human behavior and human life can be explained in terms of physics and chemistry is a poor man, with a poor view of life and with a poor power to help human behavior and human life. He needs conversion in viewpoint and in person.

When we turn to organized religion, does it speak of the need of conversion? It certainly does—and with louder and louder insistence. When the Archbishop's Report on Evangelism said: "The Church is more a field, rather than a force, for evangelism," it spoke the sober truth. I have said above that probably two thirds of the membership of the churches know little or nothing about conversion as a personal, experimental fact. That should not discourage us about the church. For hospitals are out to banish disease and yet they are filled with diseased people. Only a few—the doctors and attendants—are well. Schools are out to banish ignorance and yet they are filled with ignorant students. The Church is out to banish sin and yet it itself is filled with sinful people. That is not to be wondered at, nor need it give us concern. The point of concern

is, are the people inside the churches being converted? Or are they, having come into the church, settling down to half-conversions, living in half-lights, or worse, in complete emptiness under the respectable umbrella of the church? The acid test of the validity of a Christian church is whether it can not only convert people from the outside to membership but also produce conversion within its own membership. When it cannot do both, it is on its way out.

Many within the churches have their motives and conduct determined by other than Christian sources. Carl Jung says: "His decisive motives, interests and impulses do not come from the sphere of Christianity, but from the unconscious and undeveloped soul, which is just as pagan and archaic as ever." Here Jung says that the behavior of the person described is determined by the subconscious and not from Christian sources.

A British cabinet minister commented to a friend: "I can't say that being a Christian seriously affects the decisions I make, the way I make them, or my relation with others."

What can you expect in the laity if the ministers too lack conversion? A senior in a theological seminary asked: "What do you mean by being born again?" He hadn't run across it in the seminary. A student who had just passed out from the seminary asked me: "What do you mean by self-surrender? I never heard the word in the seminary." The preface of a book on pastoral counseling contains these words: "Let no one think he will be converted through the reading of this book." When I laid it down I thought to myself: "No danger of anyone being converted through the reading of that book. He never gets near it." The word self-surrender was not used in the book, nor hinted at. The counseling was about marginal issues with the essential self untouched, hence unconverted.

A Polish Catholic courted an American girl. While attending a Protestant church with her he got up from her side and went to the altar. The girl said to herself: "Here I am praying for

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my Roman Catholic husband-to-be, and he goes forward, while I, an unconverted Methodist, don't go forward." She went forward, and they were both converted. They called up the Methodist pastor to tell him the good news. He was cold: "You'll get over that. It often happens." They couldn't get what they wanted in that church so they went to another.

A lady asked a minister: "What does the cross mean?" The minister replied: "Well, I don't know a better way to decorate the top of a church, do you?"

A Negro woman summed it up in these words: "You can no more tell what you don't know, than you can come back from where you ain't been."

Unconverted or half-converted ministers in the pulpit produce unconverted or half-converted people in the pews. Someone facetiously defined a Methodist as "a man who has just enough religion to make him feel uneasy in a cocktail bar and not enough religion to make him feel at home in a prayer meeting." If anyone of another denomination reading the above is about to throw the first stone at the Methodist, it might be well for him to look into a mirror first!

Sam Shoemaker says pointedly that "many are not converted, but a little civilized by their religion."

I picked up my bottle of "Viet," my grass vitamin tablets. The wrapper of the bottle came off in my hand, leaving the bottle standing. As I stood there with the wrapper in my hand, I read the various items in the vitamin content. I could have become vitamin-starved reading the contents without taking the tablets themselves. Many take the table of contents of religion—its doctrines, its beliefs—but they don't take the thing itself—Christ the Redeemer and Savior—to convert and save them. They starve while reading the menu!

Many are so afraid of the hot-pots that they forget that the bigger danger is the cold-pots who outnumber the hot-pots a hundred to one. These outwardly-in but not inwardly-in church

members need one thing, and only one thing, supremely—conversion. When a bishop announced a Quiet Day for the clergy, one of them wrote back and said, “What my parish needs is not a Quiet Day but an earthquake.” Augustine describes such unconverted Christians as “frost-bound Christians.” They need the warm glow of the Spirit’s converting power to unfreeze them. One of this type prayed in a prayer meeting: “O God, if any spark of divine grace has been kindled in this meeting, water that spark.” A lot of people are in the business of watering sparks! To change the figure, many belong to “the mothball fleet of Christians—immobilized Christians.”

Listen to these statements, not from the outside world, but from within the church as they speak in “The Morning of the Open Heart” in our Ashrams.

Sapporo Ashram, Japan: “The church is not touching the painful spots in ourselves—no confession. I think I’ll get the church to confess—to bare ourselves in the presence of God.”

Sendai Ashram, Japan: “I repented of my cold attitude toward my family and last night it was all cleared. I wanted to boss my family and had no love for them.”

Hardware merchant in Sendai Ashram, Japan: “I have been a Christian for thirty years, but I find I am not honest about my income tax. I have to straighten this out. I don’t want to be frightened when a telephone call comes from the tax office.”

Same Ashram: “I have too many defects to be a good pastor. When people go wrong I should feel more deeply. I’m cold to those who fail in their Christian lives. Instead of a self-centered feeling I want to have good will toward everybody. My preaching becomes the word become word, instead of the word become flesh.”

Same Ashram: “I am tired. Someone gave me a tape-recorder, so I could listen to my own sermons played back. I was surprised. The language, the thought, the whole thing was shameful. I must start over again.”

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Hiroshima Ashram, Japan: "I need everything—I need to be made over. I need a heart that trusts the church members. I don't trust people and don't say anything for I have no faith."

Same Ashram: "I am getting inquirers, but I don't know what to do with them. Surrender is my deepest need."

Fukuoka Ashram, Japan: "Forty years I've been in the ministry and nothing has happened. I'm afraid. The sense of fear has always bothered me, also an inferiority complex. I thought I had surrendered all, but apparently I had not."

Same Ashram: "I want to get resentment and strife out of my heart. I want my church to grow from a minister-centered church to a Christ-centered church."

Amagisanso Ashram, Japan: "I want to be free from myself and be filled with the Holy Spirit. I have been saved from a disease, but the fear of it is in the subconscious mind and keeps me from serving Christ."

Same Ashram: "When I heard Brother Stanley I wondered why he talked so fast. Why was he excited? I thought I should try to talk fast, as that was the secret of his power. But when I talked it didn't impress people. I wanted to upset the world, but I couldn't upset a group of twelve people. Thought I would put on a mustache and get gray hair—that would help me. Now I see it is the Holy Spirit I need."

Osaka Ashram, Japan: "I have a destructive idea about everything. People said, 'Its mysticism you need.' But knowledge makes people proud, love makes people humble. My negativism made me break with my brother. My pride is a wall between God and myself. I feel the emptiness of myself."

Same Ashram: "It has been about a year since I began coming to church. I realize I'm haughty and proud and I've caused a lot of trouble with church members. I want to get clear of old habits. I want to be reborn in this Ashram."

Same Ashram: "We Lutherans are always saying we have the best doctrines, but our evangelism is not going. Our Lutheran Church needs another Reformation. We have many seekers in our churches, but we don't get them across to conversion."

One of the finest men in the American pulpit said: "I went to the altar twice because I was preaching an insipid gospel. Here this visitor comes and preaches the gospel with such freshness and power that people hold their hats and hold on to their benches."

From the pew, Keuka Ashram, New York, someone said: "I deliberately set out to make myself a shallow person. I find it easier. But it hurts my faith, and it hurts me." Of one church member it was said: "She believed a little bit in everything. And nothing in anything." In the voting in India with two hundred million potential voters, many of whom were illiterate, they got over the difficulty by placing the party ballot boxes in a row with a symbol on the box representing that party. One man tore his ballot into small bits and dropped a piece in each of the ten boxes—he voted for all—and none! Dr. Samuel Johnson once said roundly: "Sir, a man may be so much of everything that he is nothing of anything." Many people are so open-minded that their minds are like a sieve; they can't hold a conviction.

What about those who once knew conversion, but it has faded out? One man said in a testimony meeting: "Twenty years ago I was converted and got my pitcher full and since then nary a drop has gone in and nary a drop has gone out." Someone remarked: "Then I'm sure by now it is full of wiggle-tails." Most people need a rebirth in their forties on general principles. Hazlitt wrote of the middle-aged Coleridge: "All that he had done of moment, he had done twenty years ago; since then he may be said to have lived on the sound of his own voice." Many are living spiritually on the sound of their own voices—echoes of the past instead of an experience of the present. Harnack, the great Church historian, tracing this inner evaporation says: "The original enthusiasm evaporates and the religion of law and form arises." Said a high churchman: "I

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don't care what happens to the outside world just so I can say Mass every morning." A Mass but no message!

What shall we say of the absorption in trivial church duties in lieu of this divine contagion? Of one man it was said: "He increased his pace the more he realized that he had lost the way." Busyness takes the place of blessedness. I sat in the early devotional hour on a hillside and watched a dog excitedly wagging his tail with his head in the bushes. I expected him to jump a rabbit at any moment. But he was only after crickets. All that time and energy and attention over crickets! Many of our church activities could be classed as cricket attention. We are busy at nothingnesses!

A great deal of missionary work is left undone because the missionary is absorbed in the missionary and his problems. I said to a missionary about to be sent home: "What do you think is the basis of your trouble?" She replied: "I'm sitting on a powder keg." When I asked: "What is the powder keg?" she replied: "Myself. I'm two persons—one a person who didn't want to come to the mission field and the other, one who was afraid I'd be lost if I didn't." I replied: "You can't afford to be either one of these persons, can you? For they are both unsatisfactory. You need to decide to be a new person, different from each—to be converted." She assented that that was the only way out. It is the only way out—for everybody, East and West. No wonder a Danish doctor in an African mission field told me: "Ninety-nine per cent of the missionaries who are sent home from the mission field go on account of emotionally and mentally induced illnesses." A change of climate wouldn't make them well—a surrender to God would.

Alexander Pope, the writer, muttered: "O Lord, make me a better man," and his spiritually enlightened page replied: "It would be easier to make you a new man." People need not to be patched up, but to be made over, to be converted, to be born again. A businessman said to a group: "I want to be born." His

experience of life had led him to that conclusion. The fact is that all life is taking us by the hand and is leading us to the necessity of conversion. Someone asked George Whitefield why he preached so often on the text, "Except a man be born again he cannot see the Kingdom of God." He replied, looking the questioner in the face: "Because you must be born again." Whitefield had preached on that text over three hundred times, but life itself is preaching on it from doctors' offices, from psychiatrists' couches, from conference rooms, from factories, from international conferences, from our homes, and, if we know ourselves, from our hearts. Someone in our Ashrams said: "Brother Stanley would be a mess without the Holy Spirit." And she was right—profoundly right. We are all messes without the Holy Spirit—without Him in converting, regenerating power. Our homes are messes too. Someone has said, "Ninety per cent of homes have a problem unsolved."

A brilliant pagan told a minister friend of mine: "You don't need to create any demand for your wares. The demand is chemical; it exists already in everybody." The demand for conversion is not merely written in the texts of Scripture—it is written into the texture of our beings and in the texture of our relationships. Life just can't live unless it is converted to a higher level. It goes from tangle to tangle and from mess to mess and from problem to problem. All life echoes the words of Sir Philip Sidney: "O make in me these civil wars to cease." For every man who is not at peace with God is a civil war within himself. If you won't live with God, you can't live with yourself. The psychologist William James tells us: "The hell to be endured hereafter of which theology tells, is no worse than the hell we make for ourselves in this world by habitually fashioning our characters in the wrong way."

All of these things we have mentioned in this chapter—and more—converge on one thing, the necessity of conversion for

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the good, the bad, the indifferent. Without it the good are not good enough, the bad are too bad to be changed, and the indifferent cannot be awakened. What Jesus preached and offered, life is echoing—with increased emphasis. “Ye must be born again.”

THE NATURE OF CONVERSION

We have seen the pressing necessity for conversion, and we have seen that this necessity is not imposed from without, but is exposed from within. That necessity is inherent and hence inescapable. In this chapter we will look at the nature of Christian conversion. I say "Christian conversion" for Christian conversion is of a specific kind with a certain definite content and character leading to certain definite results in life.

The law of life is conversion. Everything is under a process of conversion. Life on this planet is based on conversion. Photosynthesis is the process by which the energy of sunlight is used in transforming water and air into plant food. Without that basic conversion life would perish. So those who say that they don't believe in conversion are really saying they don't believe in life, for life depends on and is conversion. The moment life is produced it begins to convert—food into energy, energy into accomplishment, and later on one life into another life by reproduction. A manufacturer said: "All industry is based on conversion—the conversion of raw materials into manufactured

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products." Where there is life there is conversion; where there is no life there is no conversion. The whole process of living is the conversion of lower forms into higher forms. The mineral is taken up into the vegetable, the vegetable into the animal, the animal into man, and man into the kingdom of God. In each case the lower life is born from above.

Into this vast universal process of conversion there is introduced by the Christian faith a specific type of conversion—a Christian conversion. When you realize this conversion you are introduced to the highest type of living in heaven or on earth—the kingdom of God. Christian conversion is conversion at its highest point.

To make it clear we must go over it and clear away accretions and see it as Jesus presented it. We have seen that conversion is not to be confounded with proselytism which Jesus repudiated, for proselytism is the changing from one group to another group without any necessary change in character and life. Proselytism may be shot through and through with individual and collective egotism—a desire to bolster egotisms by added numbers and to prove oneself to be superior. Jesus called proselytism a change downward. "Ye make him [the proselyte] twofold more the child of hell than yourselves." Joining the church may and often does result in a Christian conversion. Or it may result in a perversion—a using of the church as a means to one's own ends, those of gaining social recognition. As one man put it: "I looked over the membership to see which church would offer the best field to sell my products." The motives may be so mixed that it all ends in a mixed-up person—a conflict. Or, the church as a body may be so unconverted that it is ready to accept any motive. An irate liquor dealer came to an editor and said: "Don't you know that my business is on 'The Approved List' of the church?" An African chief with seven wives was offered baptism by that same "church," seven wives and all. The African chief replied: "But that wouldn't

be Christian." A man out of the bush tells a great religious institution what is Christian and what is not! He was right, for he saw this would not be Christian conversion.

This passage tells us what conversion is not: "But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God." (John 1:12.) Here he tells us that the new birth is first of all "not of blood." You don't get it through the blood stream, through heredity. Your parents can give you much, but they cannot give you this. Being born in a Christian home does not make you a Christian. "Being born in a cracker box does not make a mouse a cracker." Or as someone puts it, "God has no grandchildren." Being born in a Christian home may give you an inward push in that direction, but you as a person have to decide and make a life committal.

Second, he tells us that this new birth does not come "through the will of the flesh." You don't get it by whipping up of the will—by striving a little harder, by being a little more faithful in religious exercises, by being more regular in church attendance, by lifting yourself by your bootstraps. It does not come through the whipping up of the will, but by the surrender of the will. You don't find God through climbing a ladder of self-effort rung by rung to find Him on the topmost rung of the ladder of worthiness. This is an egocentric attempt at salvation. You find Him at the bottommost rung of the ladder, for He comes down the ladder of incarnation and meets us where we are as sinners. "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners." This is God-centric salvation. A Hindu inquirer said, "The thing that made me a Christian was the question you asked in your book: 'Is salvation a demand or an offer?' I saw as in a flash that it was not a demand; there was nothing that we do to earn it, but it is an offer which He makes at the bottommost rung to us as sinners. That opened the gates for me."

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Third, it does not come through "the will of man." No man can give it to you—neither prophet, nor pastor, nor priest, nor pope. If any prophet, or pastor, or priest, or pope says he can give it to you, he himself is in special need of it. It comes from God directly or not at all.

Then if conversion is none of these, just what is it? Jesus said: "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God" (John 3:5). To be "born of water," I suppose means to come into an outer fellowship, the church, through baptism. To be "born of the Spirit" means to undergo a change in character and life by the impact of the Holy Spirit upon our spirits. Some are "born of water," but not "born of the Spirit."

My case was like that—I underwent a half-conversion under the appeal of a preacher, joined the church, felt religious for a few weeks, and then it all faded out. I was back where I was before—the springs of my character were uncleansed. My label had been changed but not my life. I had been horizontally converted but not vertically. Then two years later I faced another crisis. This time I was not to be put off by catch phrases and slogans; I wanted the real thing.

A little white girl in Africa in a station where there were no other children adopted a make-believe playmate to whom she talked and with whom she played. Then one day she said to her mother: "Mother, I'm tired of pretending. I want a real playmate." Idolatry is "pretending"—"pretending" that this idol is God; a lot of going to church is "pretending"—"pretending" that we are meeting God when we are only meeting our social equals.

Well, I was tired of "pretending" too. I wanted reality. For three days I sought, but I received no answer. The heavens were brass. On the third day I knelt beside my bed before I went to the church and prayed: "Oh, Jesus, save me tonight." A tiny ray of light pierced my darkness; hope sprang up; I found my-

self running a mile to the church. The eagerness of my soul got into my body. I went forward to the front seat. I felt that if I could only get to that altar of prayer I would find. I know now that He had found me by my bedside, but I'd been taught that you found Him at an altar of prayer. The minister had scarcely stopped speaking when I went forward. I had scarcely bent my knees when heaven broke into my spirit. I grabbed a man by the shoulder and said: "I've got It." "It"—what did I mean by "It"? Everything I wanted—reconciliation with God, with myself, with my brother man, with nature, with life itself. I was reconciled. The estrangement was gone! The universe opened its arms and took me in. I felt as though I wanted to put my arms around the world and share this with everybody.

After fifty-six years I still want to put my arms around the world and share this with everybody. That is the reason I can't retire. I hope my dying gasp will be the words of Wesley: "I commend my Savior to you." If and when I get to heaven I expect to ask for forty-eight hours of rest, though I understand that if you give nature twenty-four hours of rest, she will balance the accounts and throw off all fatigue toxins. If after twenty-four hours of complete relaxation you are still tired, and there is no disease, then the tiredness is in the mind. Well, I'll be on the safe side. I'll double it and ask for forty-eight hours of rest. Then I'll ask for twenty-four hours to look around heaven and meet my friends. Then I'll go up to Jesus and say: "This is wonderful. But haven't you a fallen world somewhere where they need an evangelist of the good news? Please send me."

I was born of the Spirit at that blessed spot in the little church in Baltimore. Soon the whole community heard about it. Some of my chums who shared the old life with me couldn't believe it, so they cornered me one day and asked: "Stan, you ain't really converted, are you?" My reply, according to an old schoolteacher friend, was: "The h --- I ain't!" I used the old vocabulary to express the new found joy!

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So Jesus said we were to be born inwardly—born of the Spirit, and outwardly to be born of water. The whole life inward and outward, must express conversion. For if the outer without the inner is hypocrisy, so the inner without the outer is also hypocrisy.

Then Jesus said: "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 18:3, K.J.V.). Rabindranath Tagore, the great Indian poet and philosopher, said that this passage was the most beautiful passage in the Bible. He quoted it from Mark, however: "Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it" (10:15). He took the account which left out "converted" for being a Hindu he did not like conversion, confounding it, as many do, with proselytism. You cannot leave out "be converted"—the root—and take "become as little children"—the fruit—and "enter the kingdom of God"—also the fruit. The three stand together.

The three steps are: (1) "be converted"—a new direction; (2) "become as little children"—a new spirit; (3) "enter the kingdom of God"—a new sphere of living. These three give the essence of conversion.

First we must find a new direction. Converted comes from "con," with, and "vertare," to turn—"to turn with." The big question in life is, is my face or my back toward Christ? The first step in the new life is to turn your back on the old life and your face toward Christ. You do not do that alone—there is the "with." The moment you throw your will in His direction He is there with you. He helps you to do what you can't do—to break with the old life—but that decision to turn around is your decision. No one can make it for you—neither your parents, nor your associates, not even God. There you stand alone and as a free moral being you make the decision alone, severely alone. Yet you are not alone for the moment you make it, He is "with" you.

Second we must "become as little children"—acquire a new spirit. You are given a new spirit—the spirit of a little child—you have a fresh beginning with a clean slate. That emancipation from the old guilt, from the consequent sense of inferiority, of estrangement from God, man, yourself, and the universe, is the most important and radical emancipation imaginable. "If the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed." This is an "indeed" freedom—nothing, absolutely nothing is like it. You are not only emancipated from the past—you become receptive. A child is receptive. The new spirit is the spirit of receptivity. You can now take life by handfuls and heartfuls and beingfuls. You are no longer struggling with life—you take it open-armed. You are alive to life to your finger tips.

John Masefield puts it thus:

I did not think, I did not strive,
The deep peace burnt my me alive;
The bolted door had broken in,
I knew that I had done with sin.
I knew that Christ had given me birth
To brother all the sons on earth,
And every bird and every beast
Should share the crumbs broke at the feast.¹

Third, we must "enter the kingdom of God"—gain a new sphere of living. Your circumstances will be the same, but you will now live in two worlds at once—the world of physical relationships and the world of the kingdom of God. This inner world makes new the whole outer world. You will do things now from a new motive, a new spirit, a new outlook. As one of the most alive Christians I know, says, "The one thing that has changed is your reason for living." In this "new sphere of living" you supply willingness and He supplies power. Life is

¹ "The Everlasting Mercy." Copyrights 1911, 1940, 1947 by John Masefield. Used by permission of The MacMillan Company.

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no longer alone, struggling, tense, anxious, and uncertain. It is relaxed, released, reassured, and receptive. You are no longer living on the unit principle, but on the co-operative plan.

To sum up: The first step, "the new direction," is yours; the second step, "the new spirit," is *His*; the third step, "the new sphere of living," is yours and *His*.

Christian conversion is *sui generis*, a type all its own. Contrast this with the Buddhist procedure. A Buddhist priest in Japan when preaching the funeral sermon of a questionable character gives his sins a holy name, and that absolves him. Sake is holy water; a priest who had a woman is said to have a holy virgin as his companion. Give another name and everything is absolved! But in Christian conversion you are given a new nature, hence a new name; a new desire, hence a new direction; a new sphere of living, hence a new quality of living. This conversion has been described as "out of self, into Christ, into others." This is not reformation, it is regeneration.

The most striking description ever given of conversion is this one: "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold they [the old things] have become new." (II Cor. 5:17, A.S.V.) There is a "new creature," but note that it says, "old things have passed away, behold they [the old things] have become new." The usual idea of conversion is that the old nature is wiped out and a new nature is transplanted in its stead. This American Standard Version makes everything clearer. You are a new creature—"old things" have passed away; those "old things" have become "new." The old self has passed away as dominant, but it has come back new as subservient, as a servant. The sex life has passed away as lust, but it has become new as creative activity, creating within the marriage relationship, children and fellowship and outside the marriage relationship, creating new hopes, newborn souls, and new movements. The pugnacious instinct, as destructive and disruptive, has passed away, but it has now become new in that

it now fights for causes, for human rights, for the oppressed, for juster conditions. The gregarious instinct has passed away as herd subservience, slavishly doing what others do, and it has become new in an outgoing love for people without being herd bound. The acquisitive urge has passed away as selfishly piling up wealth for one's own importance and security, and it has come back as the desire to serve others through dedicated wealth. The urge for display has passed away, and it has now come back as a desire to display Him. The urge to be dominant has passed away as selfish dominance, and it has become new in its desire to have one's self and all men come under the dominance of the kingdom of God.

All of these natural urges have been perverted by sin, and now they have been converted to kingdom ends. So conversion is conversion from perversion. These urges are still there, an integral part of us, but now they are turned toward new ends, with new motives, and a new spirit. Conversion doesn't de-humanize us by transplanting an alien life on the framework of the natural, thus setting up a tension between the natural and the supernatural. The supernatural makes us more natural, converting our urges from the unnatural to the truly natural. The converted man is more natural because controlled by the supernatural, with natural joys, natural gaiety, natural spontaneity, natural freedom, natural fulfillment.

Paul Tillich puts it this way:

The New Being is not something that simply takes the place of the Old Being. But it is a renewal of the Old which has been corrupted, distorted, split and almost destroyed. Salvation does not destroy creation; but it transforms the Old Creation into a New One. Therefore we can speak of the New in terms of a renewal, the threefold "re," namely re-conciliation, re-union, resurrection.²

² *The New Being* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1955), p. 20.

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This is important for this does away with the unnatural dualism which many manifest in the new life—the natural warring with the supernatural. The Christian life to them becomes a battleground between the supernatural and the natural and hence makes one a tense, anxious, striving type of person. But in the view presented above the supernatural makes you more natural, more adjusted, more integrated, more at home with yourself and life because you are more at home with God.

The neo-orthodoxy uses the term “predicament” to describe man’s fallen state. I prefer “estrangement.” Predicament depicts a person caught because of his sins. Estrangement depicts a person estranged from God, from himself, from life. Estrangement speaks of a relationship; predicament speaks of a condition—one centers your thought on God from whom you are estranged, and the other centers your thought on yourself, the predicament in which you find yourself. Conversion from the estrangement viewpoint restores a relationship through the divine forgiveness, when God comes to us “bearing our sins in His own body on a tree.” When we are reconciled with God, a reconciliation takes place all down the line; we are reconciled with ourselves, with our bodies, with our brother man, with nature, with life itself.

A psychiatrist came to where I was writing in the Himalayas for the express purpose of surrendering himself to God. It happened on the way when he was still twenty miles away. He describes it. “I was dead tired from a sleepless night—tired and upset. When suddenly as I made my surrender to God, my tiredness and frustration dropped away. I was a new man. I came to Sat Tal striding across the mountains as though I had on seven-league boots. And I have never seen Sat Tal so beautiful before. It was alive with beauty.” He was gay with a divine gaiety. Reconciled with God, he was reconciled with himself, with his body, with his brothers, with nature, with life, and with his psychiatry. Psychiatry was no longer dominant,

proud, self-sufficient in its own techniques. Now it had a point from which to work out to life—Christ. It was a servant, no longer a master. All life fell into its place, and all life began to add up to sense and meaning.

As Charles M. Laymon puts it:

Today we would insist that Christian conversion is a new birth in Christ. Psychologically we may refer to it as a reintegration of life around a new center by which our conflicts are resolved. But as Christians we can describe it only as the finding of a new life, new standards of value, and new goals for living as a result of union with Christ.³

In other words, "Conversion is a reaction in which Christ is central."

When you make Christ central you are converted. A psychologist has defined conversion as "the birth of a new dominant affection by which the God-consciousness, hitherto marginal and vague, becomes focal and dynamic." God on the margin, something else at the center—self, sex, the herd, or just plain sin. Life is dominated by something other than God. God breaks into consciousness now and then as an Alien Intruder, disturbing, upsetting, troubling us. Then a sense of wrongness, of futility, of guilt drives us to surrender that false center. When self-surrender takes place God moves in from the margin and takes possession of the center. He is no longer "marginal and vague"; He is now "focal and dynamic." He is "focal"—at the center and all else is subservient to Him, and He is "dynamic"—He no longer operates feebly upon us from the margin. He now operates dynamically—the Life of our life, the Love of our love, the Being of our being, the Joy of our joy. As someone puts it: "I expose myself to His everything." "Jesus is Lord!"

³ *New Life in Christ* (Nashville: Tidings, 1950), p. 14.

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As Baron von Hügel, a Roman Catholic layman, said: "We have proceeded from a false basis. We have conceived of the Christian life as an imitation of Christ. It is not an imitation of Christ. It is a participation of Christ." How can one with self, sex, the herd, at the center of his life imitate Christ? It is asking for the impossible. That center is surrendered, Christ moves in, and then we participate in Christ—His resources become the spring of our actions. We live by Another.

This conversion is "the birth of a new dominant affection." It is a change in belief, but it is more than that; it is a change in attitude, but it is still more; it is a change in direction, but more; at the basis it is a change in "affection." The conversion is a conversion of our love. We have been loving self, sex, or the herd supremely—now we love God supremely. That love is not a love placed alongside other loves; it is "a new dominant affection." It is an affection which becomes supreme and commanding. It absorbs all lesser affections into itself and in the process frees them. Alan Richardson, Canon of Durham, tells us: "Conversion represents a reorientation of one's life and personality which includes the adoption of a new ethical line of conduct, a forsaking of sin and a turning to righteousness." But this may not be a Christian definition of conversion unless the reorientation is around Christ as the center. Then and then only does it become a Christian conversion.

Someone else has defined conversion as "an altered understanding." It is, but it is an altered understanding of Christ—not merely as teacher or as example, but as *Lord*, and therefore as Savior. It is a dominant affection for Christ.

The classic definition of conversion given by a psychologist is that of William James:

To be converted, to be regenerated, to receive grace, to experience religion, to gain assurance, are so many phrases which denote the process, gradual or sudden, by which a self, hitherto divided, and

consciously wrong, inferior and unhappy, becomes unified and consciously right, superior and happy, in consequence of its firmer hold upon religious realities.

This definition is sound and penetrating in its psychological phases: (1) "A self, hitherto divided"—the person is a civil war, cancelling himself out with inner conflicts. (2) "Consciously wrong"—the sense of estrangement, of out-of-gearness. As one man put it, "I'm in harmony with chaos." (3) "Inferior"—full of self-rejection, self-loathing, self-hate because he is not becoming the person he ought to be and was destined to be. (4) "Unhappy"—of course, unhappy, for you cannot make a man happy who is divided, consciously wrong, and inferior. He is basically unhappy and no amount of marginal happinesses can make him happy. Then comes conversion: (1) The divided life is "unified" around a new center—Christ. (2) "Consciously right"—accepted by God—he becomes accepted by the universe. He is at home with the universe and with life itself. (3) "Superior"—all that self-loathing, self-hate drops away, accepted of God he accepts himself, loved of God he loves himself. (4) "Happy"—of course happy, for his happiness is not now dependent on happenings, but upon relationships that persist amid the flux of happenings. He can be happy "in spite of," when he can't be "on account of." He is incorrigibly happy.

The definition weakens at the very end—"in consequence of its firmer hold upon religious realities." Conversion is not "a firmer hold upon religious realities"—it is that, but much more. The "religious realities" are a Person. He takes a firm hold on you. You are not taking "a firmer hold" on something—Someone is taking a firm hold upon you. You are not clenching your teeth with a determination to get "a firmer hold"—you "let go and you let God." You receive and co-operate and rejoice!

This statement by Mildred E. Whitcomb of what conversion means is luminous:

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If you ask what religion means to me now that my soul's pilgrimage has ended in triumph, I can say: (1) It means that my mental approach to every subject is changing; ideas stand out clearly in light instead of shadow. (2) It means my somewhat cynical attitude is undergoing a determined change. Whom God loves I must love. (3) It means I feel free—exultant—exalted. (4) When once I took fright at God's name, I now understand why there are people who stand on street corners shouting the good news about God and His Son. (5) The Church calls it conversion. The Bible calls it new birth. I call it miracle, for that is what happened to me.⁴

A voice from the past, from a second-century Christian writing to his friend Diognetus, characterizes Christianity as "this new interest which has entered into life." I can understand what he meant for I've lived my life out amid jaded civilizations in which the inner basis of life is crumbling. There are signs of outer revival caused by shots in the arm of modern scientific outlook and progress, but these outer revivals are accompanied by an inner steady decay of the philosophic and religious bases upon which life has hitherto rested. These new motives which come from patriotism and science light up life momentarily, but they soon run their courses and peter out and leave men jaded and discouraged. "My religion and my philosophy have failed me. I have no resources to meet tragedy. I hate life—I hate everything." This comes from a very noble soul—noble amid the ruin of things. Then comes Christianity with its offer of conversion, a new birth, and when it is accepted it brings what it did to the jaded and discouraged and decaying world of Greece and Rome—"this new interest which has entered into life." Life becomes fresh and meaningful and full of zest and excitement, a surprise around every corner, life popping with novelty and surprise, horizons cracking, vistas unfolding—a

⁴ From *These Found the Way* by David Wesley Soper. Copyright, 1951, by W. L. Jenkins, The Westminster Press. Used by permission.

"new interest" has entered into life! Give the movies to the jaded who need a stimulant! As for me life is my movie, and as it reels itself off before me I dance and sing and clap my hands. A "new interest has entered into life!" No wonder a hotel doorman was surprised when he opened the front door to a radiant Christian, and asked: "How are you?" She spontaneously replied: "Converted." That was the big thing that turned life into Life.

Conversion can be defined as Life impinging on life, awakening it, unifying it, setting it aglow, moralizing it, making it "care," putting a new zest into everything, and making it love. As someone put it: "For one man conversion means the slaying of the beast within him; in another it brings the calm of conviction to an unquiet mind; for a third it is the entrance into a larger liberty and a more abundant life; and yet again it is the gathering into one of the forces of a soul at war within itself." ⁵ To all it means Life. When conversion takes place all our common nouns are made into proper nouns—everything is capitalized, heightened. A new interest comes into life.

Dr. Spoffard Ackerly, Norton Psychiatric Clinic, said: "The purpose of religion is the creation of a new life, the development of feeling tone and the regeneration of psychic energy." He puts his finger on three things—new life, development of feeling tone, and the regeneration of psychic energy. At the center of the three is the "development of feeling tone." This from a psychiatrist! This in the midst of a religious world where many are afraid of emotion—as if emotion could be divorced from a profound life change called conversion! If we should hold our peace the stones would cry out!

Harry M. Tiebout speaks of this experience of conversion "as breaking through of a wall. The breaking through releases power,

⁵ George Jackson, *The Fact of Conversion* (New York: Fleming H. Revell, 1908), p. 97.

a sensation of inner strength and freedom which comes when people find themselves liberated or released from their psychological wall."

A generation or two ago the dominant motive for conversion was fear of future punishment. This persists in this generation. A professor in a conservative Bible school says: "Of all the motives which move men to be saved fear alone claims sixty to seventy-five percent. In one class not one in that class of over a hundred had been moved by love to be saved." Obviously the climate of the background of those students was fear of consequences—largely of hereafter. While this is true of such groups the motive is now definitely shifting—the fear of punishment hereafter is being shifted to the fear of the hell of inner conflicts, of neuroses, of breakdowns, of tensions, of a sense of inner guilt. The outer hell is still there, but this more immediate inner hell is now preoccupying the minds of this generation. Now the area of the work of conversion is largely in the realm of wrong thinking, wrong attitudes, wrong emotions—of a mixed-up, messed-up self. This inner hell is far worse than the outer hell, for it is more immediate, more present, more intimate. A generation that rejected an outer hell finds it has moved within. "And the last state of that man is worse than the first." "Hell is portable."

The emphasis of conversion is on deliverance from what you are now instead of deliverance from what you shall be in some future world. That future world is impinging on us still and will always impinge upon us, but the bite, the sting, the pressure for conversion comes from the hell of having to live with a self you don't like and can't respect, a self which you hate, but with which you must daily and hourly live. Can that very self be converted? To that we must now turn.

THE CONVERSION OF THE SELF

We finished our last chapter with the emphasis on the necessity of conversion delivering us from an impossible self. That is the very crux of the problem—all else is marginal.

The question of what happens to the self is central in religion. The Vedanta philosophy claims: "The self is God—realize it." But the obvious answer to that is, To tell a man earnestly seeking for God that he is "Aham Brahma" [I am God], is like telling a hungry beggar that he is food. We know we are not God and that is an end of it, for if we are God we have lost all respect for God—if we are God, then God doesn't count.

Another answer is the opposite—make yourself nothing. The hymn with the lines: "All of self and none of Thee . . . Some of self and some of Thee . . . None of self and all of Thee" is beautiful, in a way, but it is false, for you cannot live on "none of self." The self is an integral part of us and cannot be wiped out. Put out at the door it comes back by the window.

A third answer is, express yourself. This is equally impossible, for if you express yourself, you won't like the self you are

expressing. You'll do as you like, and then you won't like what you do. You can no more express yourself without evil consequences than you can say to a garden, "Express yourself," and not have weeds as the result.

Then what is the Christian answer? It is pointed and plain—surrender yourself to God. And the result? Self-realization through self-surrender. Conversion is conversion from a self-centered person to a God-centered person.

A great many people still feel that Christianity teaches world-surrender. But the Christian faith goes deeper than that, for it is possible to surrender the world and not surrender yourself. Sadhus in India are often clothed in ashes, but they are not clothed with humility—they insist on certain prestiges and order of rank in going to bathe in the Ganges. There is a flare-up if that order is not preserved. But when you surrender yourself then the self and the world come back to you; both are yours. "All things are yours, . . . the world or life or death or the present or the future, all are yours; And you are Christ's." (I Cor. 3:21-22.) If you belong to Christ, all things belong to you. The renunciation of self ends in a realization of self and the world. You no longer belong to the world—the world belongs to you—its beauty, its art, its possibility for development, its relationships—it all belongs to you. Emancipated from the dominance of self you possess everything.

The letting go of that self is the rub. As someone has put it:

The word conversion has implications which are appropriate at the most basic levels, but we are thoroughly frightened at a more superficial one. One has the feeling, when contemplating conversion, that this step may be so revolutionary as to erase one's whole previous personal life. I had yet to learn that at conversion, you do throw overboard your egocentricity, but you do not throw overboard what you are.¹

¹ Samuel M. Shoemaker, *They're on the Way* (New York: E. P. Dutton and Company).

No wonder he comes to the conclusion that the most important religious act is self-surrender. Until that takes place we are trifling with this business of being a Christian. Your self on your own hands is a problem and a pain; your self in the hands of God is a possibility and a power.

William Law said: "Self is the root, the branches, the tree of all the evils of our fallen race." This should be modified by saying: "The unsundered self is the root . . . of all the evils of our fallen race." The surrendered self is the root of all the good that has come to the human race.

Surrender is the best word I know to express just what it is, but Luther calls it "the Joyful Exchange"—the joyful exchange of an egocentric impossible self, for a God-centered possible self. Rufus Moseley used to call it "a happy yielding of yourself to God." At the time it seems neither "joyful," nor "happy"—it seems a slaughter, but it turns out to be a swap. This is what Chad Walsh said: "In as complete a surrender as I knew how to make I turned everything over to Him. With a sense of all or nothing, I took the leap of faith. And it worked!"²

Nothing else will work. All other dealing with particular sins is tinkering with symptoms. A minister sought to control his tongue by taking a red hot poker and searing it. A Hindu told me of knowing three people who had severed their tongues and had offered them to Kali, a Hindu goddess. But the self, the source of the unmanageable tongue, remained. In Russia I was shown pictures in a museum of men who had castrated themselves in an effort to overcome sex. But as someone has said: "All evil is only a symptom; the real disease lies in the fact that we have another god. This other god is called 'I.'"

This account of the conversion of Asa G. Candler, Jr., of Coca-Cola, is an illustration of how dealing with the symptom, drink, was fruitless until his self was surrendered. He said: "I

² Soper, *op. cit.*

was afraid of the unknown, afraid of myself, afraid of the final results of my back-slidings, and drank more than ever because of my fear." As he was being driven home half-drunk by a chauffeur the Voice said to him: "You must get rid of yourself; you must renounce yourself; you must reject yourself." The Voice did not say "stop drinking," but "surrender yourself." He told Mrs. Candler what had happened on the way. "We knelt in prayer, and she prayed the most beautiful prayer I ever heard. I prayed: 'Lord if I try to renounce myself will you help me?' All self-sufficiency was gone. I was as poor in spirit as a newborn babe. I felt the assurance that God had made my problem His own. We were weeping, but for the first time in my life I experienced peace of soul. We put a ribbon around the bottle of liquor in the cupboard—there it is to this day. From that hour I was delivered from the desire for drink, but more, I was delivered from selfishness and the love of money." He gives seventy-five per cent of his income to the church and hopes to give all he owns before he dies. He sums it all up thus: "The central thing in Christianity is the final and total yielding of the self, its renunciation and rejection and the entire surrender of the life to the will and way of God."

This conclusion of an ex-alcoholic and the conclusion of one of the top psychiatrists in the world are exactly the same. This psychiatrist writes: "I shall try to help him in his professional capacity, but also as to his own inner psychic structure which is still not yet a very harmonious one, but rather problematic and therefore somewhat destructive; still too much around his own ego, instead of having surrendered his ego to God." The alcoholic by personal experience and the analyst by professional experience both come to the same conclusion—self-surrender.

Now let us take one between these two—a daughter of a bishop, the wife of a clergyman who is head of a large and important school. I shall let her tell her own story:

Having been born and brought up in a missionary family where spiritual values were more highly esteemed than any other thing, I kept my faith unquestioned until I went to college in America. There I was assailed by many doubts. Nothing could shake my belief in God. My parents fulfilled His conditions and were secure in His love and faithfulness, but this had nothing to do with me; I had to taste life; I had to find out for myself.

After graduation my one desire was to get back to India. I liked it there. I loved the mountains, the people, the happy life I had always known. I wanted to write. I would travel, I would live!

Knowing the answers that would be likely to please the Board, I filled in my mission papers without difficulty and with a light heart and a daring wardrobe set sail, looking forward to the voyage which would take me home.

But in India something was wrong, very wrong. Meetings, conferences, retreats, prayers—I was surrounded with them. I had to teach Sunday school, lead a young peoples' group, take devotions, give testimonies, answer those in difficulties. This I had not bargained for. I managed to struggle along for some time, knowing a bit of the technique. But what was first empty and meaningless became bitterness and filled me with contempt and rebellion. I kept away from church when my hypocrisy became almost unbearable to myself, but my absence was noted and criticized. My work was a burden and the writing which I had looked forward to became unendurable.

Then I realized that everything I really wanted was out of my reach. I wanted fun; I wanted a good time in my own way. I would hear the orchestra playing dance music at the club and waves of misery swept over me. That was what I wanted, and as a missionary I was debarred. What a rigid and barren life was being imposed on me!

At Language School I met many wonderful young people whom I admired, but they all seemed so sure of their call; their religion meant something to them. I pitied them in my heart for being so simple—or was it that I envied them?

One Sunday in a desperate, almost rebellious, frame of mind I went to church, the struggle in my heart being almost unbearable.

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I was so unhappy something had to happen or I could not go on.

Dr. Stanley Jones was the preacher. He read his text, "Whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it" (Matt. 16:25, K.J.V.). My heart cried out, "Oh, no, not that! I do not want to lose my life. I want to live! I want happiness and beautiful things and friends. I want gaiety and popularity and a good time. I want life!" A sadness which seemed about to crush the breath out of my body engulfed me. How unfair, how cruel, how crazy—to ask me to give up life when it was the one thing I longed for—life with its music, its color, its fun!

I listened to the sermon. Step by step the way was explained; the logic was irrefutable; the paradox seemed unanswerable, so maddeningly convincing, and yet I was unwilling to accept it. It was impossible for me to give up my life whatever the promises. Then the last hymn was announced: "When I survey the wondrous cross." My eyes skimmed down over the verses. Then something like panic seized me. There was a line coming which I could not sing. Nothing could make me sing that—I would die if I had to. The second stanza of the hymn began; the first line, then the second line—it was coming nearer; what should I do? How could I give up everything? It was asking too much. "O God," I cried in my heart, "what shall I do?"

Then moved by some power not of myself, I managed to sing, inaudibly, "All the vain things that charm me most, I sacrifice them to His blood." It was done! Everything was gone. At that moment life seemed drained of everything. It was complete and utter emptiness. There was nothing left. But at that very moment, almost simultaneously, came an overflowing of breathless joy. It seemed that I would be swept off my feet so great was the infilling, the glory. Christ Himself flooded my heart, overwhelmed me with love. In a flash it was plain—*this* was life, this abundance, this joy unspeakable and full of glory.

A famous theologian said: "God was at the center of my theology, but I was at the center of my life. Exploding with ideas, I talked too much. I wanted to be accepted, but the more

I tried to prove myself worthy of belonging the less welcome I was." And then came the conversion through self-surrender. "I pitied my wife's faith. She loved me into newness of life."

As David Wesley Soper put it: "The Christian removes the cross from Calvary and erects it in his own heart. The self which has resisted and crucified God is itself crucified; God and the self are no longer enemies, but allies." He said of himself: "I was a burning pacifist, a zealous social gospeler, on fire to reconstruct everything except myself." Then he adds: "The pursuit of self is the pursuit of sorrow." Then comes the final conclusion: "Confronted each day with the inescapable either/or—to seek or to slay self, to crucify Christ or crown Him Lord of Lords. God is as near as the prayer of self-surrender.³

A Roman Catholic layman, Baron von Hügel, commented: "Until Christ works out in you an inner crucifixion which will cut you off from self-infatuation and unites you to God in a deep union of love, a thousand Heavens could not give you peace." Self-surrender is the basis of peace, and there is no other basis.

Samuel Hoffenstein sums it up in these words: "Wherever I go, I go too, and spoil everything." Everything is spoiled with an unsundered self at the center.

Jesus tried to get this across to His disciples in Luke 9. He asked them: "Who do you say that I am?" (vs. 20.) When Peter uttered the great confession: "The Christ of God," He immediately tried to bring home to them the center of His being the Son of God—a cross! Self-giving! (vs. 22.) Then He turned to them "all" and said: "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily, and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it; and whoever loses his life for my sake, he will save it." (vss. 23-24.) As the cross of self-surrender was at the center of His being the Son of God, so the cross of self-surrender would be at the heart of

* *Ibid.*

their discipleship. He taught the same lesson on the Mount of Transfiguration. The thing Moses and Elijah talked about was "his departure, which he was to accomplish at Jerusalem." (vs. 31.) That was the center of His "glory"—the cross. Then Jesus cast out the evil spirit (vs. 42). "And all were astonished at the majesty of God. But while they were all marveling at everything he did, he said to his disciples, 'Let these words sink into your ears; for the Son of man is to be delivered into the hands of men.'" (vss. 43-44.) My "majesty," He said, is not in healing—it is in self-giving, in a cross!

"But they did not understand this saying, . . . and they were afraid to ask him about this saying." (vs. 45)—afraid to ask Him, for they vaguely felt it would involve them in self-surrender. That failure to understand "this saying," and all that it involved for them now began to show itself in all their relationships.

1. "And an argument arose among them as to which of them was the greatest." (vs. 46.) The unsundered self began to upset the inner fellowship of the twelve.

2. "We forbade him, because he does not follow with us." (vs. 49.) Here the unsundered self upset relationships between groups of disciples.

3. "Lord, do you want us to bid fire come down from heaven and consume them?" (vs. 54.) Here the unsundered self upset relationships between races—Samaritans and Jews.

4. As the disciples didn't get this self-surrender as the center of their following Jesus, so the would-be disciples didn't get it either: "I will follow you wherever you go." Jesus said to him: "Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man has nowhere to lay his head." (vss. 57-58.) "You are looking for a soft journey; I'm offering you a cross."

5. "To another, he said, 'Follow me.' But he said, 'Lord, let me first go and bury my father.'" (vs. 59.) (Incidentally his father was not lying dead at home, but he wanted to go home

and wait till his father did die to give him a big funeral to keep up the family name—self again.)

6. "Another said, 'I will follow you, Lord; but let me first say farewell to those at my home.' Jesus said to him, 'No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God.'" (vss. 61-62.) The backward look showed he was feeling sorry for himself—"Look what I'm giving up!"

From the marvelous discovery that Jesus was the Son of God to the end of the chapter, not a single thing was done right by the apostles and their adherents. With that discovery of Jesus as the Son of God lying back in their minds we would have thought that now everything would come out right in them and their relationships. If intellectualism were the answer then that would be so. But while their minds were convinced their emotions were in the grip of an unsundered self. Hence they tripped over themselves in everything, in every single happening and relationship. The unsundered self was at the basis of all their failure. They were trying to save themselves in every happening and they were losing themselves at every turn. All life everywhere is a commentary on and an amplification of that saying of Jesus. To save your life in self-centered concern is to lose it, and to lose it in self-surrender is to find it. That is a law as deeply embedded in the spiritual world as the law of gravitation is embedded in the material—and just as inescapable.

This works everywhere. Before an evening discussion on home management in a small town survey of domestic relations, husbands and wives were sent questionnaires to fill in. In the space for noting causes of friction in the home, one man wrote—"Me!" That story from the *Reader's Digest* is just as new and as old as the above instances from the Scriptures. In each case the cause of friction was "Me"—the unsundered me. There is no other cause. All else is symptom, this is disease.

In the following passage we see how, if we don't belong to Him, nothing belongs to us. "I press on to make it my own,

because Christ Jesus has made me his own." (Phil. 3:12.) "Make it my own . . . made me his own." When we belong to Him, then all things belong to us, but when we belong to ourselves then nothing belongs to us. "All things betray thee, who betrayeth Me." You cannot possess "it" until you are possessed by "Him." Not that you will be given all the "its" if you surrender to "Him," but you will either get them, or you can do without them—gladly do without them, for you have Him. When you are controlled by Him then you are no longer controlled by the "its"—money, fame, things, pleasures, position, power. You are on top of them—they are not on top of you. George MacDonald said: "A man is in bondage to whatever he cannot part with that is less than himself." Surrendered to Christ we are free; bound to Him we walk the earth emancipated; low at His feet we stand straight before everything else. When we are most His, we are most our own. We are free from the bondage of things—we can have them or not have them because we have Him. We sit lightly to things because we have let down our full weight on Him.

"There shall no more be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it." (Rev. 22:3.) Where there is the throne of God and of the Lamb, there is nothing accursed there—where God rules, blessedness rules. Where the throne of God is not, where He does not rule, everything is accursed—accuses itself! Bernard of Clairvaux puts it thus, "He who will not be sweetly ruled by the divine will is penally governed by himself; and he who casts off the easy yoke and the light burden of love, must suffer the intolerable load of self-will."

If these statements come from the specifically religious side of things, listen to what psychology says: "The aim of the individual life is maturity; that maturity means the dislodging of egocentricity so that the actual center of being can be established and become the full motivation." "Egocentricity"

must be dislodged so that "the actual center of being"—God—"can be established and become the full motivation."

How do we dislodge egocentricity? This is how Christina Rossetti attempts it:

God harden me against myself,
The coward with pathetic voice.
Who craves for ease and rest and joys,
Myself, arch traitor to myself,
My hallowest friend, my deadliest foe,
My clog whatever road I go.
Yet One there is can curb myself
Can roll the strangling load from me,
Break off the yoke and set me free.

It is beautiful poetry and has much truth in it, but it falls short of deliverance from the dominance of self through self-surrender. "Harden me against myself"—that sets up self-hate, a civil war against myself—makes life a struggle, a battle with myself. This makes life strain, hence drain. "Yet there is One who can curb myself." The self is to be curbed. But the Christian way is not the self to be curbed, but to be consecrated. Surrender of the self means consecration of the self, and then you are not in a civil war with yourself, but in co-operation with a consecrated self. We are going the same way with the same motive and the same goal.

Here is how some Japanese put it in "The Morning of the Overflowing Heart."

Sendai: "I came here to destroy myself. But I can't destroy myself. I can only surrender myself, not destroy myself. If I die with Him I live with Him."

Another: "I have been praying for the Holy Spirit without surrender. Now I have made the surrender and have received the Holy Spirit. I have been troubled about the subconscious—it comes back at night in dreams. I saw it was an unsundered subconscious.

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Now I have let Him have it. I have been preaching myself, now I shall preach Him."

Another: "What did I get at the Ashram? Nothing. Everything was taken away—only Jesus remains. I have been thinking about Christ and something else. Now the 'something else' is gone and I have nothing left but Jesus. Now I have all."

In the Hiroshima Ashram: "I was able to see myself as not surrendered. It knocked me down clearly. All the veils are taken away. The real fellowship is here. This is the higher unity. This Prayer Vigil is the secret. I'd like to see an Ashram of all races, of all the world."

Another: "Total surrender first thing shown to me. I felt a strange warmth in all my body. 'One thing thou lackest'—surrender came to me."

Fukuoka Ashram: "I didn't expect much from the Ashram. But I was soon faced with surrender. I always had a veil between me and God. Twenty minutes after a talk with Brother Stanley I was released from the past. I saw Jesus on the cross. I cried all night. Here I got my eyes off the past and put them on Jesus."

Osaka Ashram: "I didn't quite understand what is meant by surrender. I see it now. The teaching concerning agape meant a big veil was taken away from me. I was an empty tomb, beautifully decorated."

Another: "I went to youth conferences, but felt oppressed by them. In those conferences we begin with the feeling that it is all right with us, all the troubles are in others. Here we begin with ourselves, with our own self-surrender."

Whether in East or West the sense of release and freedom in getting yourself off your own hands and into the hands of God is the same. One woman put it this way: "It is so comfortable to get yourself off your own hands." It is. When you are in the hands of God you are where you belong. This is home.

This surrender of the self is once and for all and yet continuous. Just as you are married once and for all in a good mar-

riage, when the vows are made and the oneness proclaimed, so you belong to Christ once and for all. It's done. Suppose your wife or husband should come to you and say: "Let's be married over again today." You would be surprised and shocked. There is a once-and-for-allness in a real marriage. Yet there are daily surrenders to each other and to the marriage that have to be made. It means an unfolding—a daily unfolding—of the word "all" when you gave your all to each other. So it is in this surrender of the self—it is once and for all and yet continuous—a daily surrender around a once-and-for-all surrender—an unfolding of what was infolded in the all of initial surrender.

Someone put it thus: "Surrender is a surrender of as much of myself as I know today, to as much of Christ as I know today."

In that initial surrender there are three stages, "mood, movement, and moment." You are brought by various influences to the mood of surrender. You have run into roads with dead ends, into frustration, into conflict, into futility, through an unsundered self. Now you are brought to the mood of surrender. Then comes the movement of surrender. You pray for grace to surrender, to make it a real surrender and not a patched up compromise—a one hundred per cent for nothing surrender. The movement is from both sides. If we take one step, He takes two. We advance into advancing open arms. The third step is the moment of surrender. There is the moment when we throw ourselves into the arms of everlasting mercy. We are His, for better or for worse, for life or for death, to sink or to swim. We close the bargain. It is done. Feeling or no feeling, it is done. The feeling will come as a result of that decision.

At the center of that feeling will be a growing conviction that Jesus is Lord. He will be Lord of you, your possessions, your

relationships, your future, your all. Among the Syrian Christians of South India there is the custom that the first words spoken to a newborn child are: "Jesus Christ is Lord." To the newborn child of God the first words whispered in the heart by the Holy Spirit are: "Jesus is Lord."

Incidentally this phrase "Jesus is Lord" was probably the earliest Christian creed: "If you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord . . . you will be saved." (Rom. 10:9.) "No one can say 'Jesus is Lord' except by the Holy Spirit." (I Cor. 12:3.) In some of the versions of the Bible "Jesus is Lord" is in quotation marks, showing that it was used as an early Christian confession, the earliest Christian creed. We have adopted that phrase as a greeting and a farewell in many parts of the world. We raise the three fingers—"Jesus is Lord"—in greeting and in farewell. It began in Japan and spread to Korea, India, Africa, America, and other parts of the world. An African artist has painted the three fingers, and copies of it are being sent to all the schools and churches in that section of Africa with the words "Jesu ni Bhwana"—"Jesus is Lord"—around the top and "Our Salutation" at the bottom. Children, workmen, professors, national presidents, and Supreme Court judges in many parts of the world love it and use it. It expresses a deep fact at the center of our faith—"Jesus is Lord." I have heard village children in India, evidently taught by their church, say to visitors and to each other: "Hail Mary." Here is seen the profound difference in emphasis between the two faiths—one centering in the human Mary and the other centering in the divine Son of God. One priest told me that he had stayed up all night giving the sacrament to those who returned to the fold, after seeing the procession of the Lady of Fatima—a conversion to a lady—Mary. This is superficial conversion and off-center. No, Jesus is Lord!

If you let your weight down on anything this side of the

divine, it will let you down. Only divine shoulders are strong enough to bear the weight of the world's guilt and sorrow. The moment you surrender to Jesus you know this is it! It is self-verifying as light is to the eye, as truth is to the conscience. Someone asked an ex-alcoholic what the word "Hallelujah" meant, and he replied: "I don't know, but I think it means 'Hot dog, this is it.'" While his language wasn't classical, his insight was clear. This is it!

This principle of surrender is not merely one used in the initial phase of conversion. It is a continuing principle to be used throughout the converted life. Instead of holding festering problems in our bosoms we get them off our own hands by surrendering them into God's hands as they come up. That takes them off our own hands and puts them into His. "The government will be upon his shoulder." He has us and our problems and we listen to and obey His solutions. Then we are not burdened with unsolved problems, but are working out with Him our being-solved problems. Psychologically this is sound; for if you hold a problem inside you, it may form a complex and a complex may become a neurosis and a neurosis a psychosis. By continuous surrender of problems as they come up this process becomes a catharsis—a daily cleansing away of possible complexes. This process of a once-and-for-all self-surrender as the problems arise is the soundest and most health-giving spiritual process I know. It is an open door out of every situation.

An hour should be "par." Within an hour we should be able to turn over to God all our problems and our sorrows. They should be cleared off by surrender within an hour. Then our desk would be the desk of an orderly executive—clear with one thing at a time in hand, instead of cluttered-up, piled with distracting problems awaiting attention and solution, a burdened soul sitting on pins and needles not knowing where to turn.

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Dr. Wayne E. Oates lists three ways of handling anxiety—by apathy and indifference—acting as though there were no problems; by hostility and defensiveness—by fighting yourself and others; or by grace through faith. That grace cannot get through to your problem without the surrender of yourself and your problems into the hands of God, and then you must listen and obey. It is not enough to surrender the problem. We must surrender ourselves, then He has us and our problems. If we try to surrender the problem and not ourselves then His hands are tied. He saves what He has—and only what He has. If we try to enter into a compromise, giving here and there and not the absolute whole without reservation, then it won't work. Many of us are willing to make Jesus king, provided we are prime minister with the real government on our own hands.

In a mission station in the Congo which I visited, a python got into the rabbit pen, swallowed a large Belgian hare, and then found he couldn't get out of the hole through which he got in. He had sense to regurgitate the hare and escape. In Malaya a python got into a pig pen, swallowed a pig, could not get out of the hole through which he came in, and was caught. These are crude illustrations of what happens spiritually. If we want freedom we must surrender ourselves once and for all and our sins and our daily problems as they come up.

Now His and therefore free, we can say:

Send me anywhere, only go with me.
Put any burden on me, only sustain me.
Sever any earthly tie, save that which binds
my heart to Thee.

Then we can add with Charles Fox:

Foolish enough to depend on Him for wisdom,
Weak enough to be empowered with His strength,
Base enough to have no honor, but God's honor,

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Despised enough to be kept in the dust at His feet,
Nothing enough for God to be everything.

So the process out of the old into the new is this—Mixed-up,
messed-up, tied-up. Remedy: give up. Result: fixed up! It works!
Nothing else will!

CHAPTER IV

THE CONVERSION OF OUR LOVE

We have seen that the deepest thing in conversion is the conversion of the self by self-surrender. We now look at the deepest thing in the self—the urge to love and be loved—and consider the conversion of that urge.

In my last book, *Christian Maturity*, I took the position that deeper in human nature than the self, sex, or the herd urges is the urge to love and be loved, and that we are therefore as mature as persons as we are mature in love and no more mature. Maturity is maturity in love. If “God is love”—the highest and ultimate truth about God—and if God has made us in His own image, then He must have stamped within us His own deepest urge—the urge to love and be loved. We are made in the inner structure of our beings to love and be loved. If we don’t love and are not loved, the very deepest law of our being is violated.

So conversion is conversion of our love. We in our blindness and stupidity and willfulness have loved the wrong things with the wrong love. We have perverted our inner urge to love and be loved and have fastened that love on the wrong things—on

ourselves and have made ourselves God; on sex as an end in itself, and our love has become sexuality; on the herd, and we have become herd-dominated and herd-worshippers. Our original Agape has been perverted into Eros. Eros is unconverted Agape. Then conversion is conversion from perversion.

How could God convert our loves? Issue commands for us to love? That would be the Word become morality. Show how hate works badly and only love works well? That would be the Word become philosophy. Lay down laws and regulations for the ordering of collective life? That would be the Word become institution. In all of these the Word has become word. They are all this side of the Truth. The Word must become flesh.

God, to redeem us at the deepest portion of our nature—the urge to love and be loved—must reveal His nature in an incredible and impossible way. He must reveal it at a cross. At the cross God wrapped His heart in flesh and blood and let it be nailed to the cross for our redemption. The cross lights up the nature of God as love. There “He bore our sins in His own body on a tree.” A friend of mine, a convert to Christianity from the Malkanas, a group of Mohammedans in India, and who is now their beloved teacher, saw two factions of the Malkanas fighting with iron-tipped bamboo poles. He ran between them and took the blows on his own head. Blood began to flow and to stain his white garments. Both sides stopped their fighting and stood over him; some ran for a doctor; others took him into their home. From that moment a reconciliation took place—a reconciliation through his blood. My friend commented: “If a few drops of blood of a sinful man can reconcile a whole village, how much more can the blood of the Son of God reconcile the whole world.” At the cross two things happened—reconciliation and revelation—a reconciliation in His taking the penalty of our sins in His own body, and a revelation of His own heart as love.

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This story comes out of the heart of the Western world. Dr. William L. Stidger tells of a large transport filled with soldiers making its way across the Atlantic in wartime. The captain saw a submarine rise to the surface and send a torpedo straight at his transport—the white mark of the torpedo showed this plainly. He shouted through the loud-speaker: “Boys, this is it!” There was no time to change course. But the captain of a small escorting destroyer also saw the submarine and the torpedo. Without a moment’s hesitation, he gave the order: “Full steam ahead.” Into the path of the torpedo the tiny destroyer went and took the full impact. The destroyer was blown apart, quickly sank, and every member of the crew was lost. The transport captain said to Dr. Stidger: “The captain of that destroyer was my best friend. A verse in the Bible now has special significance for me: ‘Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.’” Jesus laid down His life not only for His friends, but for His enemies as well.

The cross is the only place our love could be redeemed. A dissertation on the beauty of love would have left us cold; an exhortation to love would have left us unmoved; a command to love would have left us unbowed. The cross breaks us down, smashes our old loves into a thousand fragments by penitence, and then remakes them into the image of His own love. Love at the cross begets love in us. That Love forgives us, but it does more—it remakes us at the deepest place in us, at the place of our love. It converts our love. We begin to love Him, and loving Him our lesser loves are redeemed by that very loving of Him.

Nels Ferré, a theologian, said: “I’ve been converted three times: the first time to traditional Christianity; the second time to honesty; the third time to the love of God and man.” This is beautiful, but the third was the real conversion—the other

two were preliminary. A conversion that doesn't convert our basic love is less than Christian conversion.

Peter's real conversion did not take place when he left the fishing boats to follow Jesus. He turned to Jesus later and asked: "Lo, we have left everything to follow Thee; what do we get?" He had left everything—except Peter. You can see the unregenerated Peter obtruding again and again—in the quarrel over first places, in his attitude of superiority. "Even though they all fall away, I will not"—the "they—I" relationship—I'm superior; in his denial of Jesus and the cursing and swearing. So Jesus said: "When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren." Just when was he converted then? I believe at the lakeside after the resurrection when Jesus put His finger on the need of his love being converted. "Jesus said to Simon Peter, 'Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?' " The emphasis was on "more than these"—he had said that he did—"Ever though they all fall away, I will not." Then Jesus asked him the second time, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" This time He left off the "more than these"—it was a plain "Do you love me?" Apart from whether it is more or less than these—"Do you love me?" Then he asked the third time: "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" At the third time Simon was "grieved"—why? He saw that Jesus was putting His finger on the three-times denial by asking about his love three times. That brought the being grieved, the penitence, the surrender. Then Jesus ended it by saying, "Follow me." He had said that "Follow me" to Peter at the lake side before, when Peter had left the fishing boats to follow Him. Peter did follow Him—outwardly, and now and again inwardly, but mostly outwardly. Here Jesus was asking Peter to follow Him inwardly, in spirit, in love. Up to the very last Peter wriggled a bit, asking about John: "Lord what about this man?" Jesus replied: "What is that to you? Follow me!" In his giving his single-pointed love to Jesus alone, he made a last backward glance toward the old mixed-motive

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love and wanted to know what John would do. It was a dying kick of the old love. His love was converted to Jesus alone. He **was** now really converted and could strengthen his brethren—could strengthen them because he didn't belong to them anymore. He belonged to Jesus alone in love. Now he belonged to them in a secondary way for he belonged to Jesus in a primary way. His love was redeemed.

This is out of the past. When we turn to the present we find the same necessity for our loves to be redeemed—mostly redeemed from a festering self-love. Dr. Karl Menninger, head of Menninger Clinic, Topeka, came to the conclusion that his patients were there because they had not loved or had not been loved, or both. Their lack was the lack of love. That threw functional disturbance into their systems. So he called his professional, and other, members of his staff together and explained the situation—these patients were there because of a lack of love. Then they could only be cured by love—professional attention, without love, wouldn't do it. The whole institution was organized around love—all contacts with patients were to be love contacts. From the top psychiatrists down to the electricians and the caretakers, all contacts with patients must manifest love. And it was "love unlimited." Six months later they took stock to see how things were going and they found that the expected hospitalization time had been cut in half.

There was a woman who for three years sat in her rocking chair and never said a word to anybody. The doctor called a nurse and said: "Mary, I'm giving you Mrs. Brown as your patient. All I'm asking you to do is to love her till she gets well." The nurse tried it. She got a rocking chair of the same kind as Mrs. Brown's, sat alongside her, and loved her morning, noon, and night. The third day the patient spoke and in a week she was out of her shell—and well.

Dr. Menninger says that half the diseases are due to hate—and he added that half the accidents are due to hate. He said:

"Love is the remedy." He universalized it: "Love is the medicine for the sickness of the world."

Dr. Grace Stewart, professor of psychology, says there are "three basic needs to human personality: love, significance, security." The first and greatest of these is love. It is strange, that after two thousand years that statement echoes the statement of Paul. "So faith, hope, love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love." Yet it is not strange, for the Author of our beings and the Author of the Book is the same God and the supremacy of love is written not only in the texts of Scripture, but also written into the texture of our beings.

Why did a young couple go to a jukebox and have the song played over three times—the song that told of a boy who wandered over the world seeking for the answer to life and found it at last, "To love and be loved"? They played it three times for the same reason that Jesus asked Peter three times if he loved Him. The same answer came out of the jukebox and from Jesus.

Father C. Hilmer Myers speaking of gangland boys said, "Such boys can be reached by giving them what they crave most—love from an adult ready to help in an emergency."

A friend of mine, a very beautiful and wise woman and a real Christian, wrote a masterpiece for her husband, every line of which was accusing him. She was going to put it on his pillow when about to leave home. Then she went back, took the letter, put it in her purse, and instead left a marked poem by Elizabeth Barrett Browning, "How Do I Love Thee." She redeemed herself and will possibly redeem him.

There was a habitual drunkard in the community, and one morning he said: "Sam, the boys rocked me last night." The other replied: "Maybe they were trying to make a better man out of you." The poor fellow replied: "Well, I never heard of Jesus throwing rocks at a man to make him better." The

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Pharisees tried that—and needed redemption. Jesus tried love—and redeemed the woman.

As someone put it: “God loves sub-men into saints.” There is no other way to make saints.

A girl who had never been loved had a deep attachment to her dog and fought when separated from it when she was put into a home under a friend of mine. In the first few hours she bit the doctor, struck a nurse, and kicked the superintendent. One day she was so enraged she rammed her arm through a glass door. Bleeding and frightened, she ran to the house mother who gave her attention and love. From that moment she began to receive and give love. She was changed and became a capable, dependable girl. Love did it!

As William Law put it: “Love is infallible; it has no errors, for all errors are the want of love.” He might have added that love is infallible, for if the other person doesn’t receive the love then the giver of the love is the more loving for having given the love. So the pay-off is in the person. Love can’t lose.

A Salvation Army woman officer was assaulted by a woman who came in for a minor injury, a finger to be bound up. While she was binding it the woman beat her almost into insensibility. When the woman saw what she had done, she wept: “They’ll kill me if they find out what I’ve done.” “No,” said the Salvation Army lassie, “nobody will ever know. I’ll not tell them.” The woman was “broken by love” and converted.

A Salvation Army officer was called in an emergency. A woman was screaming and ready to commit suicide and threatened with a knife anyone who tried to interfere. The Salvation Army woman knocked on the door. The woman grabbed the knife and cried: “I’m going to die and I don’t see why you shouldn’t die too.” She raised the knife and the Salvation Army officer said: “Well, I’m ready to die. Are you? If we are going to die we should have a prayer.” She knelt, and the woman knelt too. In the prayer the woman poured out her soul in

confession. She was a nurse, and because of addiction to drink she was dismissed from the hospital. That rankled, and because of it she drank more. They arose from their knees, and the woman whom she was about to kill bent over and kissed her. Means were found and the nurse was able to return to her former job and is now the superintendent of the hospital.

A Hindu prime minister of an Indian state, chairman of one of my meetings, contrasted the meeting that night with the Christian meetings he attended fifty years ago when the crowd had heckled and sometimes had thrown stones. "Tonight this audience has sat in pin-drop silence to listen to the message of Jesus. What has made the change? A few miles from here is one of the largest hospitals in India, where devoted Christian men and women have served the people regardless of race, creed, color, or financial status. There is a leper asylum where they serve the lepers in Christlike service. In Gandhi's Ashram the inmates do scavenging work. But here is scavenging work of the highest kind. They take hold of the outcastes and wash their bodies, souls, and spirits and turn them into respectable citizens." Love had converted that atmosphere.

A Hindu manufacturer at our Ashram at Sat Tal said: "Do you know why I have come? Years ago when I was a boy we heckled a missionary preaching in the bazaar—threw tomatoes at him. He wiped off the tomato juice from his face and then after the meeting took us to the sweetmeat shop and bought us sweets. I saw the love of Christ that day, and that's why I'm here."

A friend of mine was talking to a Hindu shoe repairer who had lost his son and was very downcast. "Remember," said my friend, "that God is love." The face of the Hindu brightened up and he said: "Yes, I know that God is love." "But how did you know that?" my friend asked. And the shoemaker replied: "Once I worked for Foy Sahib in Cawnpore and no one could work for Foy Sahib and not know that God is love."

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One of the very gracious and loving members of our Ashram in America said to me: "Our adopted daughter was brought to us from a hospital dying for a lack of love. At three months she had gained no weight and nothing helped. The doctor gave her one chance in a hundred to live. Only love could save her. We gave it. Today she is a lovely young mother."

There is nothing understanding love will not heal, from stunted babies to drunken sots. There are no doorways closed to love. Someone said of a radiant Christian "She can go anywhere to anyone for she works by love." One man said, "I read 995 pages of a Persian writer on human relations, and she summed it up in a sentence—that sentence could be reduced to one word—love."

When John Jones, head of Police Athletic Club of New York, was asked what is the cause of juvenile delinquency, replied: "The lack of love and attention." That is true everywhere in East and West. Christianity assures us basically that we have love and we have attention—God is love. Plato said: "Love is for the lovely." But Christianity says love is for everybody—the lovely, the unlovely; the good, the bad. God loves you not because you are good, but because He is love. He may not approve of you, but He loves you.

Dr. W. E. Sangster quoted the words of the dying scientist Laplace: "Science is mere trifling. Nothing is real but love." Then Dr. Sangster added:

Science itself is "discovering" love, and an international congress on mental health declared that the taproot of mental ills is lack of it. Child psychologists have said that the question of whether children should be smacked or not is unimportant so long as the child is loved. Sociologists trace delinquency to a lack of love, and some criminologists see, in its absence, the early cause of crime.¹

From every side life is converging on one point—love. This

¹ *The Pure in Heart* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1954), p. 248.

is basic and inescapable. So the center of conversion is the conversion of love. When we surrender to Christ He takes our twisted loves and substitutes His own love in their place. Listen to what British Colonel Gardiner says: "I was effectually cured of all inclination to the sin of sexuality I was so strongly addicted to that I thought nothing but shooting me through the head could have cured me of it; and all desire and inclination to it were removed as entirely as if I had been a sucking child, nor did the temptation return to this day." And a witness adds: "I have heard the Colonel frequently say that he was so addicted to impurity before his acquaintance with religion; but that as soon as he was enlightened from above, he felt the power of the Holy Ghost changing his nature so wonderfully, that his sanctification in this respect seemed more remarkable than in any other."

Buddha felt that release from rebirth comes through release from desire. Wipe out all desire, even for life. Christianity teaches that you cannot get rid of desire, for the desire to get rid of desire is desire. You can only redeem desire. The expulsive power of a new affection replaces the old desires. The only way to get rid of one desire is to replace it by a higher desire. That higher desire is the love of Christ. Through Him "God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit which has been given to us." (Rom. 5:5.) The Christian answer ends with the positive instead of the negative, and that positive is the most positive, creative thing in the universe—love. As a high diplomat put it to me a few days ago: "Christianity is not renunciation, but fulfillment." Perhaps it could be put this way: It is renunciation on one level in order to be fulfillment on a higher level. But the end is fulfillment—fulfillment in the highest thing in the universe, the fulfillment in love.

An Italian woman heard God say to her: "Behold Me and see if there is anything but Love." We cannot see that in God unless we see Him in the face of Jesus Christ. We need Christ to be

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sure God is love. The highest in God is the deepest in us—the urge to love and be loved. In France in the days of Louis XIV theologians debated whether Hebrew or Greek was the original language. They decided on a test. Two children were taken and brought up without being spoken to in any language. The theologians wanted to see which language they would speak when they reached talking age. In a year and a half both died—died from a lack of love! A doctor told of a child not loved for the first three months of its life. He couldn't do a thing to save it, though physically there was nothing wrong with it. It died from a lack of love. A couple had gone to an orphanage to adopt a child. One little fellow particularly appealed to them. They talked to him about all the things they would give him—clothes, toys, a good home. None of these things seemed to appeal to the boy much. So finally they asked him, "What do you want most?" He replied: "I just want somebody to love me."²

That desire for somebody to love us and to love somebody is the deepest thing in life, and it is the highest in God. So the deepest in man and the highest in God do not conflict—they coincide. To be converted in love then is to be converted to the homeland of the soul. It is to become truly natural. All coming to Jesus has the feel of a home-coming upon it.

If love is the highest in God and the deepest in us, it is also the most beautiful thing on our planet. Mathilde Wrede was a baroness in Finland, the daughter of a provincial governor, she was educated, cultured, and a gifted musician. In her teens she was taken by the cross and became Christ's captive. She literally spent herself for the prisoners of Finland. In her own home she lived on the same fare as the prisoners in prison, and they knew it. She was often tired and said to her body, "O my poor body! We are now going to try to get going. Up to

² Charles L. Allen, *God's Psychiatry*, p. 117.

now you have shown yourself obedient and patient when love spurred you to work. I thank you. I know that today you will not leave me in the lurch." Love drove her on and on.

A Siberian exile, a Christian woman, wrote:

There is a Godless Society here; one of the members is especially attached to me. She said to me: "I cannot understand what sort of a person you are; so many here insult and abuse you, but you love them all." She caused me much suffering, but I prayed for her. Later she asked if I could love her. Somehow I stretched my hands toward her; we embraced each other and began to cry. Now we pray together. Barbara was converted and thrown into prison. I asked her through the bars: "Barbara, are you sorry for what you have done?" "No," she replied, "if they would set me free I would go again and tell my comrades of the marvelous love of Christ. I am so glad the Lord loves me and has counted me worthy to suffer for him." *

Here love shone through prison bars and human hardness and bleak winters. Love is a fire that cannot be quenched.

Uncle Sam, who had been born in slavery, lived on St. Helena Island, South Carolina. He once said when a mischievous young Negro had got into trouble and some people were trying to correct him: "You have just to love him out of it." That old Negro said the profoundest thing that could be said in this universe. That is what God said when He saw us caught in our sins and their consequences, "We must love them out of it." He took the cross to love us out of it. And that cross was love unlimited. It was God's grace in action. There was no other way to convert us to love except to die for us. No wonder "The symbol of the Christian faith is not a burning bush, nor a dove, nor an open book, nor a halo around a submissive head, nor a crown of splendid honor. It is a cross." ⁴ It could not be

* L. E. Maxwell, *Born Crucified* (Chicago: Moody Press). Used by permission.

⁴ W. M. Clow

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anything else. For the cross is the ultimate in love. The cross breaks me up, breaks me down, makes me over—in love.

If applied to human affairs love would be the answer. A box-car full of American prisoners was being taken through Germany. After they had starved for two days at a siding the Germans threw in a Red Cross carton of "prisoner-of-war diet." They thought they would fight over it and kill each other. A blond boy with a bloody bandage around his head grabbed it and said: "Boys, let's make this into a communion." They did. Everybody was given a piece of everything in equal portions. It changed everything—made a scramble into a sacrament. That train was strafed but not a person was hurt in that car. Even if they had not been protected from bullets, they were still safe, for "love never fails"—in life or in death.

ACTUAL CASES OF CONVERSION

We come now to look at the actual cases of conversion. Put together, their stories are the most romantic story ever heard. The story of conversion in human hearts and lives is the most fascinating story ever penned or spoken. All else sounds trivial. No wonder Professor William James, in preparation for his lectures on "The Varieties of Religious Experience," said: "The best fruits of religious experience are the best things that history has to show. . . . And to call to mind a succession of such examples as I have lately had to wander through is to feel encouraged and washed in a better moral air." I can echo that, for as I have gathered these stories of conversion through many years and from many climes I have been converted anew to conversion. A public speaker is pressed from many sides and from many interests to do what the Pharisees tried to get Jesus to do—"to speak of many things." But Jesus resisted the many things and spoke on the one theme in varying accents: "Except a man be born again. . . . Except ye be converted." In speaking of many things we leave a blur, in speaking of the one thing

Jesus left a mark. So my ministry is becoming more and more single-pointed. I may throw my net wide into the sea of fact, individual and collective, but I always pull it to the shore of conversion. And I do it without apology.

A Hindu sent up this question at the end of one of my addresses in India: "What is the purpose of these lectures, are you trying to convert us?" I replied: "Why of course I am. What do you think I'm here for? I want to convert everybody, everywhere, beginning with myself. I'm only a Christian-in-the-making, but the 'in-the-making' is wonderful and I expect to go on into 'the-made.' But I'm also a candidate for conversion. If you can convert me to something higher and better than I've got, then come along." He slowly replied: "Yes, but you'd be a hard nut to crack." "Yes," I replied, "I suppose I would be, for I'm not holding my faith, it's holding me. It's converting me from what I don't want to be to what I want to be. I call Jesus a Savior, for He saves me now from life as it is to life as it ought to be." He expected me to apologize. How could I, for if I held my peace the stones—the hard bare facts of life—would cry out for conversion, for new birth? At a conference on production, Jawaharlal Nehru, the Prime Minister of India, said: "The most important task of the country is the production of men and women of character." Jai Prakash Narain, Socialist leader, commented: "The need for economic reconstruction in the country is not as great as the need for moral reconstruction." A chief minister of an Indian state, a Hindu, said, as chairman of one of my meetings: "Our problem is now different. It was to gain independence and now it is to retain independence. For the retaining of independence we need character. There is no doubt that the impact of Christ upon the framework of human nature produces miracles of changed character. As such we welcome it." "The impact of Christ upon the framework of human nature produces miracles of changed character"—this statement spoken by a Hindu is

corroborated by all life in all ages. This happens everywhere, in all races and in all climes to the degree that we inwardly expose ourselves to Him.

No two conversions are alike. As every snowflake is different and unique, so every conversion is different and unique. "The wind blows where it wills," said Jesus in speaking of the new birth. And the word for "wind" and "Spirit" are the same. The Spirit makes a new creation every time a soul is reborn. That lifts it out of mob psychology, for the pattern is broken at every new creation.

The range is infinite from skid row to pastors' studies and all stages between. From drunkards to directors, from bad actions to bad attitudes, from sins of the flesh to sins of the disposition—all up and down the line this miracle of conversion takes place and takes place now. It would be easy to run back into history and pick out the classical examples of conversion—Paul, Augustine, Luther, Wesley, Moody. I'll largely confine myself to the recent—to the here and now. So that the reader may find something that fits him out of this here and now. For the purpose of this book is to produce conversion both inside the church and out.

I'll begin with an apparently impossible person, finding conversion in an apparently impossible place—the dizzy traffic of New York. "Where do you go next?" a multi-millionaire asked me, after a series of luncheon addresses to the bankers of Wall Street. "I'd like to take you in my car." I really wanted to go by train, for in a train you can relax, but in a car you're never off duty, no matter where you are seated! But I saw he wanted to take me so I accepted. We hadn't gone half a block when he asked, "How do you get the thing you are talking about?" I replied: "Can we talk about it going through the traffic of New York City?" He replied in the decisive way of a big businessman, "There is no other place to talk about it." I told him to watch the traffic and I would talk. I told him he would

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have to surrender to Christ the one thing he owned—himself. I felt he was responding, so I asked if we could pray going along through the traffic. I wanted him to get direct relations with God, independent of me. He replied: "Yes, I'd like you to pray, but I'll have to watch the traffic." I replied: "All right you watch and I'll pray." I'm not sure but that I kept my own eyes open! He found! The love of God like the Hound of Heaven had followed him down the years and found him in the midst of that traffic. When I jumped out to give my address on arrival, he grabbed my hand in both of his and said as simply as a child: "I'm in." And he was! His face showed it and his life since has corroborated it.

From a millionaire to a Communist is a long leap. A Communist college student came to our Sat Tal Ashram. At the first meal, he lost no time in proclaiming to us all that he was a Communist. I have found that Communists are especially convertible, so I smiled. I agree with Dr. Vories of Japan that Communists and atheists are the easiest to convert. They believe in something—if it is only a belief in unbelief. So we welcomed him to our fellowship and treated him like the rest—with love. The last day of the Ashram he came to me and asked me to pray for him, he wanted to give himself to Christ and follow Him. I asked him why. "Well," he said, "you trusted me. As a member of the Communist Party I was checked up daily by two other members of the Party to see if I was doing my work. There was no trust. But here you gave me a job and didn't come around to see if I was doing it—you trusted me. I want to get back into a society of trust and confidence instead of suspicion and distrust." We knelt together and he gave himself to Him who was called "the Great Believer in Man." He is now a radiant Christian.

It's a far cry from a millionaire and a Communist to a frustrated Y.W.C.A. secretary, but the same need underlies all. She told me she was inwardly shot to pieces, but had to keep

up appearances of religion in her job. I told her that it takes twice as much power for an airplane to get off the earth as it does to fly, that the really difficult thing is to break with the old life of make-believe and of keeping up appearances. Once you are off and make a clean break it is easier. We prayed together. As we did so she opened her eyes in surprise and said: "Why, I'm off!" She was! She opened her purse and handed me her liquor flask saying: "I won't need that any more." Then her gold cigarette case, saying: "You can sell that for missions." Then her sleeping pills: "I won't need those crutches any more." And she didn't. Later she told me: "When I look back on my past life it seems to belong to another person. I'm free—free from my frustrated past." Christ stood between her and that past, and she couldn't see the past—she saw Him.

Here is the story of a deeper conversion within the framework of a life conversion. This woman had been on her bed for a year with a bad heart. On the way to the Ashram she got panicky and was afraid she would die on the way. "How expensive it will be to ship my body clear back home," she said to herself. But she arrived, full of fears, a semi-invalid. In a talk I found that the basis of her heart attacks was conflict in the home—it was functional. She surrendered herself and her fears to God. Her very face and attitude changed. She drove back the five hundred miles in one day, not even tired. She went to her doctor, and when he saw her he asked: "What's happened?" When she told him, he said: "If half my patients had what you have, they'd be well. You had better tell them." A pastor some years later pointed her out to me at a luncheon and said: "Do you see that little woman? She is the greatest spiritual power in this city." From a fearful, beaten bundle of humanity to the greatest spiritual power in the city! Then her alcoholic husband had an accident, so she wrote: "Instead of the accident's acting as a deterrent to him it acted just the other way. He became a real alcoholic. I thought I had some understanding

of what alcoholism in its worst stages would be like. I found the actual experience much worse than anything I had imagined. No words can describe it—the rapid deterioration of the alcoholic, the complete change of personality and appearance, the terrible sufferings and illness, even D.T.'s. One day I dropped on the bed at the end of my rope. I heard myself saying: 'I have nothing left but God.' And as quick as a flash came the thought: 'If you have God you have everything.' It was almost like hearing an audible voice. Then came one of those flashes of understanding that seemed to open up a whole new world of thought. It was a turning point. I began to overcome negative emotions with positive. And it worked. I believe I have completely recovered from the effects of illness and there is a deeper joy inside than I have ever known. And then since December fifteenth my husband stopped drinking and for six weeks he hasn't touched a drop." (Incidentally, he died a Christian!)

We will shuttle back between East and West for down underneath surface differences there is the same basic human nature—in the same basic human need. A businessman in Shizuoka, Japan, was drinking; his business was about to go on the rocks, and he thought of suicide. He came to our meetings two years ago. He came back with tears streaming down his cheeks, was converted, and he and his whole family baptized. He attends church twice on Sunday and is a happy, growing Christian man who reads *Abundant Living* and *Growing Spiritually* daily. He took an emotionally upset young man into his home to help him, and that young man has been converted and straightened out. A girl in the same condition was converted and straightened out and is now going into full-time Christian service. A derelict became a rescuer.

Speaking of a derelict becoming rescuer reminds me of a woman who came to one of our Ashrams. She was hysterical and about to leave. I could do nothing with her. She seemed headed for a mental hospital. So I turned her over to some one

who began by telling the woman that she had been just like that too. At this the woman pricked up her ears: "Could this obviously radiant personality have been as I am?" She became open and receptive instead of rebellious and negative. In prayer she turned herself over to Christ and got up well. The proof of it is that she is now working in a home for handicapped children and doing it efficiently and well. She, herself, who was headed toward a mental hospital, is now breathing new hopes and new life into stunted young people.

A man and his wife in Japan wanted to become Christians. She had a terrible temper. He said: "I'll let her become a Christian first and then if it changes her temper, I'll become a Christian!" He became a Christian!

A Buddhist woman refused to let her son go into the Christian ministry. He wanted a Christian wife, so she compromised on that. She went to church to find a wife for her son. And she was converted! She found the wife too. She now goes around helping smaller churches as atonement for keeping her son out of the ministry. The son became a Christian architect and mother and son are happy and useful. But Christ didn't despise her motive of going to church to find a wife for her son. He took her where He could and led her to where He would.

Referring to motives, one of the most outstanding lay Christians of Japan came to Christ with a very questionable motive. He had a drugstore, but because of his drinking it was near the rocks. So he went to a Salvation Army meeting and went to the "penitent form" hoping that the Salvation Army with its contacts in America might get him a loan for his shaky business. After he got to the "penitent form" he was really converted—motives and all. Now he has four drugstores and since his conversion nine years ago he has kept a prayer meeting going every morning at six o'clock—3,285 consecutive days with the thermometer often twenty degrees below zero in Hokkaido, the northernmost island. There might be three to six persons

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with him, but he would always be there. Jesus did with him what He did with the Samaritan woman when she said, "Give me this water, that I may not thirst, nor come here to draw"—wanting to be saved the trouble of that walk. He cleansed her and her motives. Jesus took this man on the level he could get him and then proceeded to purify everything about him, including his motives. He does not ask that we come with a pure motive or a pure life—He asks, Do you want to be different? Well? Whole?

A businessman in America was in the hands of a pagan psychiatrist who bled him to the tune of \$65,000, and he rather grew worse. This psychiatrist interpreted twelve hundred dreams for him. He kept a pad of paper by his bedside so he could write down the dreams for the psychiatrist to interpret. He saw he could go on no longer with this futile analysis of himself stretching across years. One day he walked down the steps of the hotel, where the psychiatrist's office was located, a sad and broken man, for the staff he had leaned on had broken in his hand. He heard a Voice saying: "Look this way." He felt it was the Voice of Christ, but he didn't know how to find Him. Then one day he heard me speak on the kingdom of God, and as he sat and listened he said to himself: "This is it. My quest is over." He accepted the kingdom of God as a little child. He walked straight out of his fears, his frustrations, his resentments, and his futility—straight into a new life. All these things dropped away like dead leaves before the rising sap of a new life. He became an integrated, completely whole man. He made it financially possible to found the Christian Ashrams in America and left a foundation for evangelism. For he wanted others to share what had been so freely shared with him. A Christian psychiatric center in Lucknow, India, is a memorial to him. His experience with a pagan psychiatrist did not sour him against all psychiatry, for pagan psychiatry was a perversion. It knew how to pick people to pieces, but didn't know how to put

them together again on a higher level. It knew nothing of conversion and hence was completely helpless in the situation—a case of the blind leading the blind.

In contrast to this a psychologist, head of a personnel division of a great corporation, came to me and without preliminaries, said: "I want to be saved." That was refreshing, for most people beat around the bush. He was ripe for conversion. A few moments later when we rose from our knees the light had come on in his eyes. He was saved—no other word fits!

The reason counseling has to be strung out interminably is usually because the counselor hasn't got any conversion to offer, therefore has to deal interminably with minor issues with the central issue untouched—the need of conversion. Someone remarked to friends as she went off to counsel with someone: "I'll be back in fifteen minutes. They either want it, or they don't want it." Too hasty? Perhaps! But interminable counseling and interminable analysis is too slow and is often only a learned blind to hide the lack of remedy on the part of the counselor or the analyst. The unconverted can't convert the unconverted.

In speaking to a woman's meeting I could not help noticing a fashionably dressed, beautiful woman seated beside the aisle. At the close as the people passed by she said: "If I had what you have I wouldn't be in the mess I'm in." I asked her to remain for a talk. Her life was in a mess—her home was going to be broken up after Christmas; she and her husband were going to hold together till after Christmas so as not to break the children's hearts. She had no inner resources to meet this impending tragedy. She was empty. I asked her to pray—Christ had the answer. She promised me she would but later wrote me that she didn't know how to pray. So she wrote a letter to God in the only language she knew—the language of the Country Club: "Dear God, life has dealt me a very bad hand and I don't know what card to lead. Please show me what card to lead and I'll lead it." She signed her name. A very dim prayer, but profoundly

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meant, and God heard her prayer. Her home did not break up after Christmas—she held it together by her changed spirit. Soon she had two classes on the home in her own home. Now she goes across the country speaking on the home—the best speaker on the home I know. Her denomination has made her vice-president of the international convention, the highest office that can be given to a woman. People have come to our Ashrams saying: “We have come to find out what it is that makes her tick.” A few years ago she was a mess, now she is a message. Note that I say “she is a message,” for she is just that—she gives it and lives it, the word of conversion made flesh.

From that respectable scene in a respectable home we turn to this story of “From Murder to the Ministry.” Appollo Maweja was trained as a skilled electrician in a big mining center, Kolwezi, in the Belgian Congo, Africa. He says:

During the years I was working there I attended the Catholic services occasionally, but my religion meant nothing to me at all. The plain truth is that I was a real “rotter,” a habitual drunkard and a nightly adulterer of the very worst sort. One night I became involved in a fight over another man’s wife. I was thrown into prison. But a “buddy” of mine was my guard and he did me favors. But one day at the command of a white man in charge of the prison, the guard, my “buddy,” struck me a blow. I was so blinded with rage over the betrayal of my firm friend that I grabbed a big stick like a mad man and struck my friend with such powerful force that I killed him instantly.

Immediately I was tightly chained with my hands behind my back. The chains ate into my flesh and I bled internally from the many beatings I rightfully deserved and received. I was given life imprisonment and was chained to another prisoner, also guilty of murder. At night he would tell me of his Savior. He had no Bible, but he knew many verses by heart and repeated them to me. [So this one murderer got the message of Christ from another murderer.] He was transferred after ten months. I acquired a Bible, but it was discovered and burned. I secretly acquired another and

in order to conceal the ownership of this precious treasure I carefully divided it into three sections. Two other prisoners who had become interested in knowing about Christ helped me daily by carrying their portion of the Scriptures under their prison pullovers, just under the belt. Nightly by a small lamp I read and read till I had read the Bible through. When I came to the story of Saul I saw myself. I had been kicking against the pricks. I would run away no longer. I surrendered to Him. Paul began to be my example. As he did so I preached to my fellow prisoners. The change which came over me was noticed by the prison-keepers and they made me "papita," head prisoner of the prison, responsible for the other prisoners. Finally because of good behavior I was released unconditionally. While in prison I was given the verse, "The Lord looseth the prisoners!" (Ps. 146:7.) It became true. I was doubly loosed—inwardly from shameful sin and degradation and outwardly from prison walls. In answer to my prayers, God gave me a wife—a sweet-faced and brave young woman of my tribe who married me though she knew my past history—and she shares with me the desire to proclaim God's Word. On being released I was baptized, and since I knew my Bible so well was taken into the Evangelists' School where I am today, January, 1954. For the rest of my life I can do nothing but serve Him and praise Him whose willing prisoner I am forever.

Without that inner conversion, cleansing away the guilt and degradation he would have been a prisoner forever, even after he had served his sentence. But inwardly free, he became outwardly free and now he is ready for anything, anywhere. "The Lord looseth the prisoners!"

We must dip into the past for a moment to find conversion, not only from degradation and futility as in the above cases, but from religious respectability. Thomas Bilney, familiarly known as "Little Bilney," chanced on the words: "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief." (I Tim. 1:15, K.J.V.) "That one verse through God's inner

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working did so lift my poor bruised spirit that the very bones within me leaped for joy and gladness. It was as if, after a long dark night, day had suddenly broken!" It became a burden on him to win Hugh Latimer, a popular man at the time. Latimer, who became bishop, was burned at the stake with Ridley at Oxford in 1555. Bilney after hearing him preach said: "Prithee, Father Latimer, may I confess to thee?" Latimer beckoned him to a quiet room and there listened to the most wonderful confession he had ever heard. Bilney told of his struggles for salvation, of the reading of the text. Latimer had experienced the same soul hunger for years and to the astonishment of Bilney he arose and knelt beside him, seeking guidance from his penitent. Bilney drew from his pocket the New Testament and read the passage in Timothy. There Latimer had his soul illuminated and saved.

This story also out of the past will fit the soul of many a modern preacher. Thomas Chalmers preached the law for eight years with little result. Then he moved from the law to Christ, and found Him as his personal Savior and Lord. He said: "It was not until the free offer of forgiveness through the blood of Christ was urged upon the acceptance of my hearers that I ever heard of any of those subordinate reformations which I had made the ultimate object of my earlier ministrations. To preach Christ is the only effective way to preach morality." As a result of this change in Chalmers and in the emphasis in his ministry he wrote the moral law upon the soul of Scotland.

This fits the experience of a bishop in the early days among the Maoris of New Zealand. When he preached against their infanticide, their adultery, their cannibalism, their cruelty, their lies, their stealing, they laughed at him. "Those things may be bad for the white man, but they are good for us." When he spoke of God through love coming down to redeem us through Jesus Christ on the cross then they were all eyes, all ears. They drank it in. Soon these customs began to drop away, and they

began to be changed people. Conversion did not come through the preaching of morality, it came through the preaching of the gospel, the redemption through Jesus. Conversion is not from badness to goodness, but from the bad to God and then to goodness.

If just preaching of morality won't do, then the preaching of question marks will do less. Paul Kanomori, called "the Moody of Japan," was thrown into prison for reading the Bible. He concealed a Bible in the lining of his jacket and committed it to memory, lest it be taken from him. He came out of jail and became an out-and-out liberal. He found that the Bible was full of mistakes. He remained in that dark period of his experience for twenty-four years. Then light broke. "I became a little child in the pure simplicity of child-like confidence and faith. Now wherever I go I preach on one theme—Jesus Christ and Him crucified!" Thousands were converted. People are not going to be converted to question marks, they can only be converted to exclamation points! A question mark ends in being bent toward the earth, an exclamation point points toward heaven—the difference in destination between the two attitudes. Now Kano-mori had something to preach and the people had something to be converted to.

Speaking of becoming a little child, here is a child's conversion, a child of eight: "Dear Mother, I couldn't help but tell you I have surrendered myself to God. Brother Stanley helped me a lot. God sent a light in me, and I was bursting out with joy. And I am now going to go to church every Sunday and I am going to study about God and be the very best girl in the whole world. Carolyn."

If that child was young, here is a younger. A mother sat in a church service with her three-year-old son on her lap. In order to keep him from becoming restless, she called his attention to the stained-glass window which pictured Christ, knocking at the door. In his little ear she whispered: "That's Jesus knocking

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at the door. He's knocking at your heart's door. Will you open your heart and let Him in?" He responded: "Yes, mama, I will, I will. I'll let Jesus in." He never got away from the reality of that moment and as a man, testified that that was the occasion of his conversion. Too young? One is never too young and never too old.

A Japanese pastor told me of going to a town and of staying at a doctor's house. None of the family were Christians, and none of them attended his meeting. But when he got back after the meeting he witnessed to them and the whole family was converted, except the old mother. She wouldn't have anything to do with it. She was over eighty and had been bedridden for six months. The pastor spoke to her and went straight to the point: "You are old and you are soon going to die—are you ready?" "No, I'm not," she replied. He talked to her, and she said that she didn't understand. Then he said: "Your soul wants to go to heaven, but you are weighted down by sin like lead. Jesus is the scissors that can cut that rope." "Will He do it?" she asked. "He's already done it if you accept it." "Yes, I will," she replied and her face burst into joy. All the family came rushing in, and there was general joy. The old lady opened her eyes suddenly and exclaimed: "Oh, I've never seen anything so beautiful as those peach blossoms. I'm eighty, and I've never seen them before. And the ants, aren't they lovely, and God made them." Then she dreamed one night that she was walking behind a grandchild. She got up and began walking around the room holding on to the furniture. Her grandson took her on the back of a scooter to call on her old friends to testify to what Christ had done for her. Now she is going alone, and there are a lot of old people in the church as a result of her witness. Four things are there—she was converted to Christ, then converted from a drab world to a world of beauty, then converted from invalidism to new life, then converted from uselessness to winning others. It all happened as a result of one word, "Yes."

That same pastor told me this story. A nephew of a doctor's wife was a drunkard (in the West we would call him by the more respectable name, "alcoholic," but it's the same ugly thing), a thief, and had been in jail thirteen times. He asked the doctor's wife for money and she replied: "I'll give you the money, provided you go over to listen to this pastor, to hear what he has to say to you." The young pastor, fresh out of the seminary, told this man all the theology he knew, beginning at the existence of God. The man sat there, uninterested, waiting for him to get through so he could get that money for sake (liquor). When the pastor had exhausted his theology and didn't know what more to say, the man looked up and saw a picture of Jesus with a lamb in His arms, and he asked, "Who is that?" The pastor said: "Somebody who is interested in you—loves you." "Me? I'm a no-account bum, nobody cares. Is it a he or a she? No, my mother doesn't care, nobody cares." The pastor replied: "It is Jesus—He cares." "Well, how can I meet Him? Will you call Him?" The pastor said: "He's here. Close your eyes and He'll come." He tried to say the name of Jesus, but it was so foreign, he stopped and said: "Tell me the name again." He prayed: "O Jesus, help me out of my difficulty. I'm a no-account bum." Tears began to roll down his face; light dawned in his face. His aunt, watching from behind a screen, ran in and threw her arms around his neck and wept with him. "Here is the money for the sake in celebration of this," said the aunt. "No," he said, "I don't want that any more." He came the next day to the pastor and said: "I want to do something in gratitude. Let me clean the church every day." And he did. The doctor's rickshaw puller who had been a drunkard and was converted, talked to him and encouraged him and said to him: "Now go to your mother and ask her forgiveness." "But I have no clothes and no money." The rickshaw puller replied: "Take my clothes, and here's the money to go." He went. When he got off the boat there was street preaching, and a man was heckling

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the preacher and upsetting the meeting. He said to himself: "Now that I'm a Christian here's where I can help." He went up to the man, gave him a good tongue-lashing and knocked him down. Police came and put him in jail. Word was sent to the pastor, who came and explained the matter to the police, and they let him go. He became an employee of an electric light company and lived and died a wonderful Christian. Two or three things stand out in that story: (1) The pastor got nowhere when he talked theology; he got everywhere when He preached Jesus. (2) The aunt wanted to celebrate conversion with sake. She was one of those well-meaning, shallow people who celebrate everything with drink—even Christmas and a New Year! The drunkard corrected her. (3) The rickshaw puller was just the friend he needed in the early crucial days. (4) His way of manifesting the new life—by knocking the heckler down—was mistaken, but sincere. The angels smiled and said, "He'll get over that." And he did.

Alongside of that we might put a drunk in Harrodsburg, Kentucky. In my student days I stood in the open square by the courthouse on a soapbox on "County Court Day" and preached. Just in front of me was a drunk who was being held up partly by a peeled stick he had in his hand. He kept commenting on what I was saying: "That young fellow makes me feel like crying." I talked with one hand on his shoulder, to keep him quiet. At the close I invited those who wanted to be converted to come to the mission. Among others, this man came. "Do you want to be saved?" I asked. "Yes, but I'm drunk." "I know you're drunk," I replied, "but He can save you." "If you say so it must be so," he replied, and we got on our knees. I prayed, and then he prayed, and in the midst of it he opened his eyes, looked around surprised: "Why He has saved me! And I'm drunk too!" He got up, took a whisky bottle out of his pocket, and gave it to me: "I won't need that any more." He handed me the stick and said, "I won't need that any more,

either." He walked down that aisle not only saved, but sober. Conversion had saved and had sobered him at the same moment. A miracle? Yes, of course.

That miracle happens everywhere it is tried. An alcoholic told me he had saved eighteen alcoholics, got them straight, but he himself would fall again and again into drinking bouts. In the midst of his own failure he never gave up working to help others. Then one day he was lying in bed reading *Abundant Living*, when suddenly the light dawned. He knew he was a changed man. He went to the telephone, called up a friend, and said: "It's happened. I'm free." And he was. He has never touched alcohol since. Now he works with the leisured heart.

A boy in Japan began drinking at fifteen, at seventeen was a confirmed drunkard, and at twenty-seven an alcoholic. Someone, not yet a Christian, brought him to a Methodist missionary lady, a Miss Cole. He was a train conductor, and she went to see him off at six o'clock each morning and at five in the evening when he returned she met him again. She had prayer with him asking God to keep him clean in body, mind, and spirit. She did this every day twice a day for a month and a half. At the end of that time he suddenly had an impulse to pray. He did so. He didn't know what to pray, but he prayed the prayer of the missionary. Tears began to stream down his cheeks. He was converted then and there. He became an excellent Christian, entered the ministry, and now has two sons in the ministry. The other Japanese drunkard who looked at the picture of Christ and asked "Who is that?" was converted at the very first mention of Christ, this man awakened more slowly for it took a month and a half.

The story of Plotinus is to the point. "I spent the day trying to make a corpse stand on its feet without success. I came to the conclusion that it needed something on the inside of it." And he put his finger on the central need—"something on the inside." That need is the same for everybody everywhere, East

and West, no matter whether you're an alcoholic or just a bad-tempered nuisance to yourself and others. A woman was asked if her husband had a den. The reply was: "No, he growls all over the house."

A professor of economics, brilliant of intellect, felt she could solve all the problems of life by her intellect. As she tried it everything seemed to fail. Her life was messed up and frustrated. Then Good Friday came and she heard the words: "It is finished." Then as she put it: "I felt that this was the finish of all my pride and self-sufficiency. I accepted what He had finished on the cross. That moment I was free and released—I was converted." She is now an honored member of "The Twelve" of the Sat Tal Ashram in India.

A Muslim woman was near death in childbirth. Another member of "The Twelve" of the Sat Tal Ashram, a missionary, went to see her. She had cotton in her ears. Feeling she should not let the woman die without some word about Christ she took the cotton out of her ear and whispered that Jesus could save her. In a moment she began to say: "Jesus saves me. He saves me," at the top of her voice. The relatives clamped their hands over her mouth, but she persisted and urged them to accept Jesus as their Savior. After an hour she died with His name upon her lips. One sentence whispered into a receptive ear and she passed from death to life.

From this instantaneous deathbed conversion of a Muslim to this more deliberate life conversion of a Hindu shows the very wide range of the working of the Spirit. A Brahmin student, studying for his M.A., was asked by his elder brother to attend one of my addresses to the educated classes in Gokhale Hall, Madras. He didn't want to come, for he was tired, but because it was his elder brother who urged him he decided to go. He said: "You spoke on the Cross, and when you asked those of us who wanted to follow Christ and to be prayed for, I put up my hand, just a little way, for I didn't want my brother or the other

Brahmins around me to see me do it. As I went home on the tramcar that night Jesus seemed to sit beside me, and I knew that we belonged to each other forever. I had always conducted the worship before the idol in the home, but it never occurred to me to do it again, and it never occurred to the household to ask me. They saw a profound change had come over me. Seven years later I was baptized—baptized by an Anglican bishop with ministers of seven other denominations laying their hands on me.” (Incidentally, the Anglican bishop had three years of correspondence with his recalcitrant brethren over what he had done!) He invited the non-Christians in his office to come to his baptism. They came for they saw it was befitting—inwardly he was a Christian, outwardly he should be one. He nailed his colors to the mast, though by now he was a high railway government official. He said to his office staff: “I’m a Christian. But I shall need help. I will make many mistakes, but I want your help. Be free to correct me when you see I’m wrong.” One day a young Hindu clerk came up to him and said: “Sir, I find you rather troubled and sad today. Didn’t you have your Quiet Time this morning?” That was real help! He was deputed to come to a settlement with Pakistan when the division was made between India and Pakistan and the railways were cut. India needed records of pensions, salaries, provident funds, and such things. Pakistan also needed records. He was instructed by the Indian government to give record for record. On the way to the meeting he received guidance from God as to what he should do. He went into the conference room and said: “Here are your records—all of them. They are yours, without strings. If you want to give us our records, well and good.” The Muslims, taken aback with this, consulted together and said: “We can’t let these Hindus be better than we are. We’ll give them more than they gave us.” And they did! When it came to the financial settlement they wrote him out a check for two million rupees, saying: “If Mr. Venugopal says that is the

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amount owing from us then we needn't look it up. His word is sufficient." He came away with more records than he gave and with this check in settlement because he applied a Christian principle. Then he was put in charge of a railway where Communist influence had infiltrated and the office staff work was almost at a standstill—a kind of sit-down strike. He learned the names of thirty-five hundred of his office staff, invited them to his house for lunch each day, confessed to them where he was wrong in administration, and when he told one Hindu clerk that he was sorry for his mistake the man burst into tears, for the clerk expected to get the blame—as was always the case between a superior officer and a subordinate. The climate changed in the office. They came to him and asked if they couldn't work at night to catch up arrears caused by the slow-down movement. And they did! Arrears were caught up and communistic influence faded out in that railway. Now the finances of the whole of the railway system in India are in his hands. His father stayed with his son a year to see what had happened and came back and reported to the family: "Venu is a sunyasi [renounced man] in government. He has found God—and we haven't." His mother has been baptized and is radiant. One of the highest officials in the land said to him: "Some of you Christians have the blueprint for the answer in the matter of remaking people. I do not have it." This man is a member of the Sat Tal Ashram, one of "The Twelve," and is the word of Christianity become flesh, the outstanding Christian layman of India. A raised hand, just half raised, started all this!

A Brahmin student and a British Tommy alike were in need of conversion—something to bring life under a central control and cleansing, and direct it toward great ends. The British Tommy came to India with no education and no desire for one—he was an unawakened clod. Then came a conversion in a Methodist church in Hyderabad. With the conversion came a mental awakening. He walked seven miles a day to get a

language lesson. When told that the authorities would not allow him to take the examinations since they were only for officers, he replied that he would become so proficient that they would have to allow him to take them. To make a long story short, he became a fellow of the Madras University, received his Doctor of Literature from Oxford, became the head of the Nizam's College and then became tutor to the Nizam's two sons. A street in Hyderabad is named for him. All this took place in the very city where he began life as an ignorant, unawakened Tommy. Conversion is the conversion of the total person—spirit, mind, and body.

It is a conversion of the face. An unconverted actor, a friend of mine, was always given the part of a villain in a show. After his conversion his face was so changed he could not play the part of a villain. So he had to be given the part of the announcer, and today he is in charge of the total show. From villain to director was the result of a conversion which changed his face and his function.

I sat at night on an upper veranda in Calicut, India, talking to a very upset, frustrated man. He was an Indian, but with the coming of independence life for him had been set in reverse. He had been a district superintendent of police under the British and had sent a great many of the followers of Gandhi to jail and was given the king's police medal for it. When independence came the bottom dropped out of things for him. "I'll get it in the neck now," he said to himself. So he resigned at forty-two years of age. "What shall I do with my life?" he asked. I replied: "Give it to Christ." We prayed together and he surrendered his life to Christ. He arose a happy man. A few days later he came and asked: "Do you think I could go into the ministry? Could I study at forty-two years of age?" He already had an M.A. and L.T. so he was well educated. I suggested that he go to a theological seminary for a year and try it out to see if he could study. He did so and came out at the top of his class.

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He went to Cambridge University, England, and took a three-year course in theology; then went to Union Theological Seminary in New York for two years. He came back to India, became a professor in Serampore Theological College and is now a secretary of the National Christian Council of India. He came to our Ashram a few months after his conversion, and here we give the servants a holiday once a week—including the sweeper. The sweeper's work was to clean the latrines, a work which no one but an outcaste would do. We volunteered to take their jobs. When this ex-superintendent of police had volunteered to do the sweeper's job, he came back and said, "Now I'm ready for anything." And he was! Having done the lowliest job he was ready for the highest. One of the mottoes on the wall of our Ashram at Sat Tal is:

Nothing above the Kingdom,
Nothing outside the Kingdom,
Nothing against the Kingdom,
Everything under the Kingdom.

A Brahmin told me he was converted when a bus accident threw them all into a mass of broken misery—Brahmins, low caste, everybody. When he came out of that catastrophe, all his Brahmin aloofness and pride was broken down. He knew he belonged to everybody and especially to Jesus who was the Son of Man! It took an overturned bus to upset all his values.

We must go back to conversion as the awakening of the total person. A gentle-faced woman gave herself to Christ in one of our Ashrams. Inwardly she had heaven, but she stepped with that inner heaven into an outer hell. Her husband would go on drunken bouts, lock her out of the house, even nail up the doors. He gathered her clothes into a pile, smeared lipstick on them, and tore them to shreds. Then one day he took her by the throat and was choking her to death when the Voice said, "Relax." What a time to ask her to relax with a man's hands

around her throat choking her to death! But she did just that. In doing so she slumped out of his hands onto the floor and was saved from his clutches.

Her husband lost his business. She asked me if she should get a divorce, and my reply was: "Well, I don't tell anyone to get a divorce, but if anyone has a right to a divorce you have that right. There isn't a single thing he hasn't done to break up the home." She went down to the last divorce paper, but when she was about to sign it something within whispered: "You can't." And she didn't. Then followed five years of hell. But she kept her four children in college by keeping a job herself. When they all graduated one of her daughters said: "Mother, I don't believe you could do a wrong thing if you tried." A lovely tribute from a daughter! After her children had graduated she said to me: "Do you think I could get a college education? I've never had one, and I'm fifty-two, and I would have to keep a full-time job, can I do it?" My reply was that having gone through what she had gone through she could do anything. So I said: "Go ahead and try it, and we will be with you with our prayers." Her eldest son drives her to the university each day as proud as can be of such a mother. The story has a sequel. She won her husband back to sobriety and to the establishment of his business again. Love won out! Without a basic conversion that held her steady, all these outer pressures would have broken her.

Here is a similar story of a woman who married a man of a faith other than Christian. He had been married three times. To escape his torments the first wife turned to drink, the second to sex, and this third one turned to God. She was converted in a Prayer Group. This gentle slip of a woman became as strong as steel through it. When she asked me whether she should get a divorce I replied: "Well, you certainly have a right to a divorce, but are his torments breaking you?" "No," she replied, "I'm growing under them." "Then stay where you are," I replied.

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"That is what I was hoping you would say." She stayed right there and went through hell, but lived in heaven at the same time. It made her husband wild that she had slipped out from under his torments, that he had lost all power to torment her. He told someone: "Blanche [not her name] and her friends are praying for me, and I have to act like a hellion or they will get me." She stood up in one of our meetings and said: "I'm the woman who lives in heaven and hell at the same time." Conversion gave her heaven within and circumstances gave her hell without. "He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world."

Here was a home already broken up. The woman stood inwardly empty to face life again. Fortunately she came to an Ashram and was converted. With the conversion came the mental awakening that almost invariably follows. She said: "Do you think I could get a college education? I'm forty-five. I'd have to keep a full-time job." I advised her to do it. She came out of the end of a four-year course "Cum Laude," and was so good she was given a scholarship to get an A.M. degree in psychology. Now she has organized a continuous Prayer Vigil, going on through the twenty-four hours throughout the year in shifts of half an hour. I've helped her get people to take half an hour in the East—India and Japan—where the periods would be difficult or impossible in America. Look at that picture—a broken home, an empty heart faces a life with bleak prospects. Then she is converted and receives power to face life, to gain her college education with honors, and to organize a Prayer Vigil girdling the globe. She went from emptiness to fullness, from nothingness to everything!

This power through conversion is seen in a refined little Japanese woman. She and her husband were baptized into Christianity without understanding it. They were born of water, but not of the Spirit. Then he died, and she had to take over the presidency of the business—a shipbuilding business. She felt

burdened with it. When her pastor told her about self-surrender—about conversion—she surrendered and was really converted, and it cleared up everything. She says: “Now I simply follow His will, and it is a miracle all the way through. An old lady and I meet each morning for prayer in a nearby mountain. It isn’t this or that that I give. I give all.” Then she became ill—vomited blood. “I took it to the Lord and I was healed. Now it is all clear.” The business is booming; they are building large ships. Now look at that picture—a gentlewoman, bereft of her husband, faces the responsibilities of big business without inner resources. She found them in conversion, then faced up to them through the power of prayer and full surrender and came through it all serenely and with power. She became ill, went to God, was healed, and went on her way rejoicing.

An elder in a church in Korea was asked why he became a Christian, and he replied: “I saw the strength of the pastor in standing up to the Communists; he was the only one who dared to do so. The pastor was murdered, but his strength in the face of it made me want his secret of strength. I found it.”

Another church elder who had been a brutal policeman under the Japanese in Korea said he became a Christian when he saw his father-in-law face death without fear—even with joy and anticipation! Both of these wanted to embrace the faith of these who had the strength to face death with joy. They embraced a persecuted faith because it gave strength to the persecuted!

In Korea a pastor was lined up to be shot by the Communists. As they were about to shoot him they said: “You’re a great Christian preacher. Before you die preach us a sermon on Christianity.” They did it in semiderision, but he did preach them a sermon for forty-five minutes. At the close the Communist soldiers simply walked away and left him alone. He walked away free. He told me how he became a Christian. His mother was a strong Buddhist and opposed Christianity. She

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had a horrible skin disease like leprosy, and she was blind. A Christian woman came to her house and said: "What kind of house is this where Jesus has not come to forgive your sins, heal your sicknesses, and take you to heaven?" She said this and was so frightened she ran away. The mother began to think about this and asked her son to go and get this woman to have her come and tell them more. The woman came, and the mother was converted. In three days after she became a Christian the skin disease was healed and in five days the blindness. The boy was so impressed at what had happened to his mother that he was converted. He and his lovely, able wife now head a blind and deaf school in Taegu, Korea, with about two hundred blind and deaf children. Now put your finger on the salient features of that story—a timid Christian woman witnesses to a diseased, blind woman. She is converted and healed, and her boy converted when he saw it. He preaches a sermon with great boldness and freedom to Communists when about to be shot, and his captors are captured by it, and they free him. He sets up a home for blind and deaf children. The witness of a timid woman did it all!

Speaking of conversion and healing, here is a case where both happened at one time, and on the slenderest knowledge about the Christian faith. He heard one sermon, that was all, but that was enough to lead him into everything. Many in Christian lands are sermon-soaked and are empty, for they take nothing. He heard one sermon and took everything! The pastor of a large church in Japan, Rev. Agata Shigezo was, before his conversion, head of the post office in Matsuyama at thirty-two, the youngest postmaster in Japan. He was an ardent reader of Confucianism and had as his ideal of a gentleman: "One who speaks softly and has no outer show." He was called a model young man, but he had three soft vertebrae in his spine and had to wear a brace. It was a frustrating illness. A post office employee, a Christian, suggested that he go to church. He

knew nothing about the Christian faith, but he went. He was helped by two men, one on each side as he walked. He listened to the story of the prodigal son for the first time and came home in tears saying over and over again: "I've found my Heavenly Father." In his eagerness to tell his wife he walked ahead of the friends who had helped him. For days the tears of joy streamed down his cheeks. His wife thought the softening of his vertebrae had attacked his brain and had softened that! A few days later he was in a barber shop, and leaning over he found the pain in his back was gone. He went to the doctor who had treated him and the doctor said: "That's not the body I've been treating." He was well. He took off the braces. He was converted and healed at the same time, and he had asked for neither! It was the sovereign love of God, inviting, invading, instructing, infilling! He resigned his postmaster's job and entered a seminary. His wife, who had been an ardent Buddhist and had gone around the island's eighty-five Buddhist pilgrimage stations, was converted after a year and a half when she read, "Come to me, all who labor and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest." That was different—no Buddhist scriptures had ever said that—come to a Person! She did! The amazing part of that story is on what slender knowledge the Father takes people! The idea that you have to know everything before you can receive anything is absurd. He knew little or nothing and received everything! He was receptive, and that is the one condition. Receive the Kingdom as a little child—that is enough to begin on!

Here is another conversion and healing, but different. A Japanese airman who had gone through the war without a wound found himself in a hospital with tuberculosis. He had only about three hours of rest a day for a year. He hated Americans, but found himself eating American food in the hospital. When they gave him blood transfusions it was American blood. "What is this?" he said to himself. "These people

fight us and then feed us and give us blood transfusions of their own blood. Perhaps it is Christianity which can account for this contradiction." So he asked his wife for a Bible, which she had but had never read. He thought Christ and Buddha the same, and as he had no use for Buddha, he wanted to get rid of Christ too. In his reading he came across John 11:25-26: "I am the resurrection and the life . . . and whoever lives and believes in me shall never die." That went home. In Jesus he would never die—have eternal life. It lifted a burden—he had eternal life now. He was filled with peace and joy. The doctors had said his case was hopeless, but now with his hate gone and his depression lifted he began to get well. He is now well and walks ten miles a day through snow in his rural evangelism. His son also had tuberculosis, and he, too, is healed—the family is a lovely Christian family. The interesting thing is that the American air base force is supporting him in his rural evangelism. He told the air base force, "I'm your blood brother. I have American blood in my veins." Another instance of being "saved by blood"! This gift of human blood introduced him to the gift of the divine blood—the Cross.

An American airman, DeShazer, was on the first flight that bombed Tokyo. But his plane could not get back to the carrier, so had to land in China, where the crew was captured by the Japanese. They were thrown into solitary confinement. DeShazer spent forty-two months in solitary confinement, which was so depressing that his colleague went insane. The Japanese, fearing the same thing would happen to DeShazer, gave him a Bible to read—the first thing he had to read in all those weary months. He was not a Christian, but he read it eagerly, and there in the solitude of his cell he found Christ—or Christ found him. He came out of those three and a half years of solitary confinement unembittered, in fact all on fire to help the Japanese people. He went to America, got an education, and is now back in Japan winning people to Christ. Along with him is a

Japanese airman who bombed Pearl Harbor. He, too, was converted to Christ. Together they speak under the title, "I bombed Pearl Harbor" . . . "I bombed Tokyo," comrades in a common cause. Conversion converted them to Christ and to each other.

I sat with a blind man and got his tragic story. He was a lieutenant in the Japanese navy and went through the whole of the war without a scratch. Then came the armistice. He was deputed to go on the deck of his destroyer and announce to the crew that the war was over. Just as he got on the deck a torpedo from a submarine, which probably had not heard that the war was over, struck the destroyer and in the explosion he was made blind. He went through the war without a scratch and then five minutes after the war was over he was left blinded for life. He seemed to be in the grip of a cruel fate. He brooded over his condition and then one day decided on suicide. He stole out at night, a moonlight night, to throw himself under a passing train. As he was about to do it someone saw him and yelled: "Look out, you're in danger." He pulled back. "Somebody cares. There might be some kindness in the universe." That tiny ray of light that flashed in his heart from that voice that called out in the dark opened to him a possibility. Then a pastor became interested in him, took him by the hand, and led him to the church. He preached that morning on "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you." That blind man did ask, did seek, and did knock—and it was opened to him. Then and there he was converted by a surrender of himself and his blindness to Christ. He pulled straight out of that depression and inwardly was on top of his world. He said to himself: "I wonder if I could help handicapped people as this pastor has helped me. But no university will take a blind man." A Christian college did take him, however; his wife and his sister read the books to him. After graduation he set up a workshop for the handicapped. He

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is happy and adjusted and useful. The government has recognized his work and expressed its gratitude. Nothing—nothing, absolutely nothing—could have pulled him out of that pit of despondency, set him on top of his world with joy, and turned his life into a channel of usefulness, except conversion. Everything else would have stood beside that pit wringing its hands in despair, or looking on with apathy, or would have philosophized as to why this should have happened. Conversion took him by the hand and pulled him out and set him on his way rejoicing.

In a conference of astrologers in Lucknow, India, presided over by a prominent official, one astrologer said: "Success can be acquired by changing one's name. This receipt for prosperity applies not only to individuals but to towns, states and countries." There you have it—just change your name and prosperity will come to you! Call to the man in the pit by another name, and he will walk out of his despair!

C. T. Venugopal was asked by a Hindu doctor in Burma to come to the hospital and see his "prize patient." A Hindu M.A., discouraged, unemployed, and sick, had seven operations in a government hospital. Two men, an Indian clerk and an old Anglo-Indian, went around the wards distributing fruit and cheer and love. This Hindu called them and said: "What makes you do this?" They replied: "The love of Christ." "Could I find this love of Christ here on my bed, and will it work?" He tried it that night. It worked. He prayed and surrendered himself to Christ—and found Him. He had been crying out in pain through the nights with an incurable disease. The next morning the pain was gone. The X-ray showed that he was healed. He became the radiant center of the hospital—the real head of the hospital. People came to him with their troubles and with their disputes. When Venugopal came in the first thing this patient asked him was: "Are you a Christian?" They kept him in the hospital after he was well because of what he was to everybody.

But they overworked him, and in six months he contracted pneumonia and died. He was baptized before he died. The doctor and the head nurse spoke to each other for the first time at his funeral and were reconciled. The whole hospital was moved by his death. That is what conversion does. He was changed from a man crying out in pain and despair through the nights to a man over whom the whole hospital wept when he passed to the Beyond—that is transformation. He was converted and healed at the same time. He had nothing to begin with except a few sentences of assurance that it would work. He tried it and it worked! It works anywhere it is seriously tried, and for any type of person.

Take this Chinese intellectual, an engineer in Manchuria. He said to me: "What are you going to do with me? I'm a man without a faith. In America no church would take me for I don't believe in the divinity of Christ. I have lost my faith in Confucianism, and I do not believe fully in Christ. So I'm dangling." I asked him how far he had got along. He replied: "Well, I believe Christ was the best of men." "All right," I said, "let's begin there. If He was the best of men, then He is your ideal. If He is your ideal, then you must be willing to cut out of your life everything that He cannot approve." "But that's not easy," he replied. "I didn't say it was easy, but if you are sincere you will do it." "Yes, if I am sincere I must do it," he added. We knelt in prayer for strength to begin a new life. As he arose he said: "Now this is different. Everyone else has suggested that I had to believe something first. Here you tell me, 'He that is willing to do His will shall know of the teaching.' You tell me to do and I shall know. I'll try it." The next day he came back radiant. "All my doubts of who Christ is are gone. Anyone who can be felt as I can feel Him is real. I have been talking to my wife, and, though she has been a nominal Christian, she's going to seek and find Him too." From

an agnostic to an evangelist—that is transformation. Conversion brought him from confusion to contagion overnight!

Mr. S. Kurusu was the special Japanese envoy to Washington just before Pearl Harbor, with a special mission to try to head off the war. I believed then and I believe more so now that he and the others in the Japanese Embassy at Washington were not trying to play a double game, pulling the wool over our eyes while Japan was getting ready to strike. The fact that none of them were ever called before the War Guilt Tribunal shows that the military was convinced they knew nothing of what was going to happen at Pearl Harbor. When I saw Mr. Kurusu in Japan after the war, he said to me: "Japan will never become a democracy until Japan becomes Christian." I looked at him straight in the eye and asked, "But are you a Christian, Mr. Kurusu?" He replied: "No, I am not." "But don't you want to be?" "Yes," he slowly replied: "I do want to be." We knelt in prayer in his drawing room, and he gave himself to Christ in an act of simple committal. When we arose I said to him: "Now when I return to Japan in two years I want to find you in the Christian Church." He replied, "You'll find me there."

When I returned after two years the first thing he said to me was: "I couldn't wait for you to baptize me, I've already been baptized." Then I said to him: "Now I'm going through many cities in Japan in evangelism. Give me a message for the people." He replied: "Tell them what I said before. 'Japan will never become a democracy until Japan becomes Christian.'" In his memoirs he mentions his conversion. After his death his wife, an American lady, said: "He was so much happier after he was converted to Christ. It lifted him out of his depression." She leaned over and kissed me on the forehead.

As we mention depression this conversion comes to mind. An ardent Shintoist, head of a primary school, was shocked beyond words when the defeat came to Japan. He said to himself: "Shinto has fallen. I've been identified with it, so I go

down with it. I promised to commit suicide. I will do it." But as he was about to do it a Voice said: "Don't." Instead as a symbol he cut off his finger. He went to Tokyo seeking for a Bible and found one in the Salvation Army. He read it avidly. He came to a verse which was given to me in the beginning of my ministry and has become my life verse. Before I begin to speak before an audience I ask them to bow their heads in prayer while I remind God of my verse. "You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide; that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you." (John 15:16.) When he came to that verse, light broke in upon him. God was choosing and seeking and sending him! He opened his heart to this seeking love. He came straight up out of his despair and gloom, is happy, and is now running a Sunday school. His "kingdom of Shinto" was a shakable kingdom. It went down. Now he belongs to an unshakable kingdom—the kingdom of God.

A depressed man in Japan and a depressed man in a hotel room in America meet the same saving, transforming Lord. E. S. Standish was a successful man in the business world, but he had no peace of mind. He went to his hotel from a meeting, feeling outraged—he was righteous and respectable, why should he be converted? He threw open a Gideon's Bible, and the first verse his eyes fell on was this: "Destruction and misery are in their ways. And the way of peace have they not known." It was for him! He fell on his knees. He knew that Standish had been playing God. Now at the end of his rope he surrendered to God and arose with peace in his heart. He has had it ever since!

A woman found that her husband had a mistress—his secretary. After the wife was converted she went to this mistress, and they talked it through, and the secretary was converted. Now these two women, sisters in Christ, both prayed for him, and both loved him—in a different way. After twelve years he was

converted. Nothing but conversion, for all three, could have healed that triangle.

Nothing but conversion could have helped this man out of his impossible situation. Roger Lee Winter was called "the Mighty Mite." He weighed only 145 pounds, but had a record in football of 7.4 yards per carry in the season of 1951 for Kalamazoo College. He was asked by professional football teams, New York Yankees and Los Angeles Rams, for a tryout. Then he was struck with spinal and bulbar polio and put in an iron lung. Then began a fight for life. Chest congestion from lying inactive set in and required a tracheotomy, a surgical opening into the windpipe, which meant the iron lung operation would have to be suspended for the operation. "The idea of stopping that big pumper filled me with panic. Was this the end?" A pastor called on him and as a preparation for the surgery asked, "Roger, do you trust in God?" He answered, "I do." "As soon as I said 'Yes' to God, a sense of overwhelming calm came over me. I was no longer afraid of what might happen when they turned off the iron lung, or whether the operation would be a success." Now he is able to do without his iron lung, has married his nurse, runs a magazine service to support himself, writes on a typewriter at thirty words a minute with a stick in his mouth which strikes the keys, teaches a Sunday school class, is chairman of the sports committee of his church, and is coach of a successful basketball team. His story put on a radio program "Unshackled" goes to one hundred and fifty radio stations. He sums up everything in these words, "If I had the opportunity to go back to that first day and to talk to God, and He gave me the choice of going on as I was with sports and everything, or of going through this experience again and of having what I have now, there would be no other decision. I would choose this." When that calamity struck it could have embittered him, but it "embettered" him—and conversion

was the turnstile on which the whole thing turned. Nothing else would have done the trick.

Margaret Slattery was an outstanding lecturer to youth, holding them and helping them as perhaps no other person in her generation. Then a calamity struck her—a great sorrow—and she ended in a sanatorium. The doctors said she would never again sleep more than two or three hours a night. I met her on board ship going across the Atlantic on a study tour of Europe. She said rather pathetically, "Can you help me?" I replied, "You won't take what I offer. It's too simple. You want something abstruse and psychological. I am offering you Christ who can remake your life from the ground up." She went to Canterbury Cathedral, and being a lover of reality, reacted against the service. "Oh, it's all too slick and easy. They don't mean it." "Yes," said Christ to her as she bowed in prayer, "these people won't let me do anything for them, and neither will you." She fell on her knees, for she knew it was true. She was proud even in her inner ruin. She carried in her purse a clipping: "My head is bloody, but unbowed." That was her philosophy and it was noble, but impotent. We sat before the Secretariat of the League of Nations at Lake Geneva, Switzerland, looking out over the Lake. After I had finished praying for her she said: "Do you know how long you've prayed? An hour." I felt I couldn't let go, for what message did I have to give to the East if it wouldn't work for this woman?

The crisis came in Rotterdam. She got up at five o'clock, knelt beside her bed and offered her shattered life to Christ—really offered it. He was waiting for that hour of repentance and self-surrender, and He took her. When we met at the station platform I could see from her walk that something had happened. She walked up to me and said: "I'm the happiest woman on earth. I've got it. If you had had a telephone I would have called you up at five this morning to tell you the news." She went to her room that night and slept for eight solid hours,

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the first time in several years. After a week of this she cabled her doctor: "The miracle has happened. I'm sleeping eight solid hours a night." When the party was about to break up, I going on to India, and the rest back to America, I said to her: "It may get dark one of these days. You may get into a tunnel. When you get into a railway tunnel and it gets dark what do you do? Throw away your ticket and jump off? Or do you trust the engineer and hold to your ticket?" She promised she would trust God and hold to her ticket. When I was in Cairo holding evangelistic meetings, I had a cable from her in New York: "Arrived safely, have my ticket." For the rest of her wonderful life she had that "ticket." If that conversion had not taken place her inner conflicts would have battered her frail body into ruin. Conversion added twenty fruitful years to her life.

Ann, the blasé American wife of a Hindu professor, said to Ada Findlay, a very fine type of missionary: "I'm looking for a faith, what do you think of Buddhism?" She very wisely brought her back to Christ. Then Ann said: "Hurry up, you've got just ten minutes in which to convert me." Ada talked with her, prayed, and gave her a book. One sentence in the book let the light of Christ into her chaotic soul. She breezed into the Kingdom—and how! Now she is the center of spiritual contagion and has grown almost suddenly into a wise, loving, radiant, mature personality.

Here was a man who thought he could climb to God by doing this, doing that, lopping off here, and lopping off there. Phillip Wolfe Murray, Commander, R.N., gave up pleasures to please God, read the Bible every day. He gave up dancing, trying to purchase the favor of God. He spent seven years like that—a sore bondage. Religion without Christ can be bondage—very sore bondage. Then he saw he was saved by grace through faith.

What a burden rolled off my soul. What a relief. Now think! I had been nearly eleven years—three under conviction, eight seek-

ing to please God by prayers, by self-denial and good works, never knowing when I had succeeded. And when I saw that God had saved me and that I needed not to do anything more to be saved, I danced around my room! I have been dancing ever since. Not with my heels, but in my heart, praising God.¹

Here is a student of Stanford who was in the same boat—trying to get to God instead of letting God come to her.

I went to church that Sunday morning merely hoping for some help in my searching; and when I left, two years of aimlessness and futility and agnosticism had simply faded out as if they had never been. For the first time I felt alive and that my life had a center and really mattered. There is a great difference between believing in God and not believing in one, and in having turned yourself over to Him through Christ. Finally all the barriers of doubt and pride and independence went down, and I saw that Christ had been there all the time. I would have known it if I hadn't been so set on going to Him, instead of letting Him come to me.²

A well-educated Japanese businessman, head of an oil refining company was on his bed, and a pastor talked to him about God. The man said: "I'm a scientist and a businessman. I have only one direction—the material. What is this It?" The pastor replied: "It isn't an It—it is a He." "How can I see Him?" "Close your eyes and I will call Him for you." They prayed. Tears began to flow down the cheeks of the businessman, and joy filled him. "Now it is all clear," he cried. He lived joyously about six months and read the New Testament avidly. Those six months before he died were worth the rest of his life. He had found Him—and that meant heaven here and hereafter.

¹ Pickering, *Twice Born Men*.

² Bryan Green, *The Practice of Evangelism*, p. 28. Used by permission of Charles Scribner's Sons and Hodder and Stoughton Ltd.

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A pastor's father became a Christian when he went to the Bible and to church to get arguments against Christianity. He didn't get the arguments, Christ got him! After he was converted he held a Sunday school in a Buddhist temple whose priest had stolen the jewel out of Buddha's brow and had absconded.

This pastor told me of a man who hated his own father because the father would not spend a yen on a radio or on going to a movie—he was a miser and was bent on getting rich. The son was on the point of deciding to become a Communist, and then kill his father so the younger brother could get the inheritance. His real motive was hatred of his father, but he hid that motive behind the apparent altruism of wanting to do this for the sake of his brother. Then to make it more legal he could become a Communist and have behind him the principle of wanting to get rid of rich capitalists. He looked on himself as strong and as a hero through it all. Then he came to the pastor and asked him what he thought of all this. He wanted religious sanction too! The pastor introduced him to Christ. All this false bravado and the hidden motives dropped away, and he saw his former "strength" and "bravado" as weakness. He became a Christian and lived a happy, useful life.

One morning in my Himalayan paradise, Sat Tal, where I was writing, I shaved with Colgate's, manufactured here in India, and was reminded of a boy with all his earthly goods in a red bandana handkerchief on a towpath, who was met by a Captain of a steamboat on the canal. The boy said he knew something about soapmaking and candlemaking and was going to the city to try his fortune. The Captain suggested that he give his heart to God and give one tenth of all he made to Him. The boy promised both. The boy's name was Colgate, and he gave millions to Christian work. It was that decision on the towpath—a decision that meant conversion, and that touched the ends of the earth—for good.

It's a far cry from an unsophisticated lad on a towpath carry-

ing a red bandana to a drawing room on Fifth Avenue, New York, where I sat with a lady who belonged to the upper ten of New York Society. At the close of the dinner served by a French maid and prepared by an East Indian cook, the lady asked if she could speak to me alone. She said: "I've never had any contacts with religion except to have a cocktail with my rector in my country home. [A rather tenuous contact!] But someone gave me your book, *The Christ of the Indian Road*. I never intended to read it—I took it to bed with me one night to put me to sleep. [Another woman wrote me: "I find your books an excellent antidote to insomnia!" They put her to sleep!] But before I knew what was happening it was morning and I had read the book. I got up from my bed, sat before the fire, and simply let down the barriers of my being [they were many!], and a warm living Presence moved into my heart. Now I call that hour my 'Shining Hour.' From that moment I have been different. People come to me with their problems—they think I've found something. Before this happened to me they wanted me to be the head of the Philharmonic Society of New York, but I refused as I didn't want to meet so many Jews. Now I have become the head of it, for since this has happened I feel as though I'd like to meet those Jews. Now what do you think has happened to me?" I replied: "I think you have been converted." "So do I," she replied, "but now that I'm a Christian how do you act as a Christian? What's the technique? I'm a musician and we have a technique, what's yours?" I was rather nonplussed at this simplicity and directness and instead of an answer I parried it by saying: "Now as you go into your society with this new life you'll have to work out a technique and as you do so write about it and write about it in the language you used at the table tonight. They will listen to your language when they won't listen to mine." I threw out the suggestion and went back to India. A year later I received a manuscript entitled "Technique." It was from this lady. I began reading it from

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a sense of duty since I had inspired it, but was soon stabbed broad awake—she had something! It was published under the title *I Follow the Road* and went into several editions. Then followed another—*The Rule of the Road*. Up to sixty she had produced nothing. She said to me: “Up to that time my autobiography could be summed up in three words—I was fleshy, fashionable, and futile!” How is that for an autobiography! Very like that biography of the sons of a “judge” in Israel: “And he had thirty sons who rode on thirty asses.” That was all that could be said of them! Well, she was converted from futility to fruitfulness, and interestingly enough the first thing that dropped away, without a word being spoken to her about it, was her cigarette smoking. She felt instinctively that it was incompatible with this new life.

A high official in the railways of India, an Englishman, hated Indians, and they hated him. It was a vicious circle of hate and got them nowhere. He became spiritually hungry and began to read books. Someone suggested that he read the Bible. He did. The Sermon on the Mount got him; he was converted while reading it—really converted. Then he began to love Indians, and they began to love him. He would sit down with an Indian clerk and help him with his work. Non-Christians began to go to church when they saw the change in him. The work of the office picked up—everybody wanted to work now. A simple change in attitude on the part of one man changed the attitude of a whole office. Conversion converts!

A very fine type of African pastor told me his story. He was converted at eight years of age and filled with the Spirit at seventeen. When he was filled with the Spirit he was so filled with love that he went around hugging and kissing everybody! He began preaching from house to house, found baptized Africans drinking beer, and broke their pots. They charged the young man before the officials. He was taken to the police superintendent, and he witnessed to Christ to him. “Yes, I know

what you are talking about, and if I could I would free you," said the white man. He was taken to jail, and the white man in charge struck him in the mouth and said: "You kafir, you preach against our beer? Away with your Jesus." The young apostle replied: "You can hit me, but you must not speak against my Jesus." When he was taken before a white magistrate, he witnessed to the magistrate. The magistrate said before the court: "If we had ten young men like him we could convert this part of Africa." He freed him.

I stood on a hilltop in Africa where Bishop Springer has his home. As I looked around the horizon I saw a school, a theological seminary, a hospital, an agricultural training institute, a large farm and animal husbandry, a school of engineering, a church—everything to lift the soul, the mind, the body of a people. It was largely the work of Bishop Springer. Yet he himself came near being sent home the first year he was in Africa as a young missionary. His spirit was impossible. The Committee decided he should be sent home. Someone suggested that they give him another chance, provided he would read the thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians every day. He agreed. He was changed by it—converted. Years later when they wanted a leader as bishop they chose him! An "impossible" young missionary becomes a bishop, full of possibilities through the replacing of an unconverted egoism by love.

"Unconverted egoism" was seen in a young minister in India who told his sister not to marry a certain young man though he was a very good Christian. The minister did not write to her for four years except to say: "If you don't obey me I'll shoot you." Then he heard me tell how when my daughter was married that I wrote to her and to her husband and said: "I hope my motto and my attitude toward you will be, 'Never in the way, never out of the way.'" That melted him. His egoism was surrendered. He was converted; he had a new spirit. He wrote to his sister asking forgiveness.

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A missionary doctor who had seen service in China . . . told . . . of a young girl who set sail for the mission-field with great ardor and enthusiasm. The final stages of her journey had to be made in a crowded steamer which slowly crept up the swirling waters of a great Chinese river. For a certain period she had to stand among a crowd of Chinese who thronged her on every hand. She was small of stature. A huge Chinaman suffering from discharging ulcers was so close to her that she felt the discharge drop on the thin material of her blouse and soak through to her shoulder. A great nausea permeated her whole being. When she landed she was in tears. The kindly doctor met her and inquired what was the matter. She told him she had made a great mistake. She hated the Chinese and could not bear to stay and live amongst them. Very wisely and tenderly the missionary sent her away into retreat. The burden of her prayer was this: "O God, either you must show me your glory or I must go home." During the days that followed she found God. She realized all that God had suffered at her hands; all He had done for her. She came down from that retreat and began a life spent in most devoted service to the Chinese people.*

This account was concerning a young missionary. Now concerning an old missionary who had long lived a defeated Christian life. In his despair his eyes fell upon the words: "Christ liveth in me." "What," he said, "is Christ really living in me?" He jumped up, stolid Presbyterian though he was, and danced around the table saying: "Christ liveth in me!" "Christ liveth in me!" Defeat was gone—Christ had come!

This conversion from defeat to victory takes place among all races and in all places.

This came from the Ashram, held at Hiroshima, where the first atomic bomb fell: "It was just one phrase 'The Lord is Risen!' that changed my life. I was the one who has been afraid of making mistakes. I am a new person now. I have to work effortlessly." (Repatriate from Manchuria).

* Leslie D. Weatherhead, *How Can I Find God?* (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1934), pp. 106-7. Used by permission.

Another: "I'm so full of gratitude I can't speak. I was like Saul blinded by the light, groping in darkness, but something like scales fell from my eyes in this Ashram. I've got hold of it. I put the blame on everything except myself. I was always blaming the character of the people. But I'm mistaken—I'm the cause. My graduation from the seminary and my ordination were great, but this has been greater. These two things changed my status, this has changed me."

Then the man who was written up as the hero of Hiroshima: "I was pressed to surrender myself in this Ashram. I have been the target of criticism, so I have pulled in on myself. I failed to go forward. I was afraid. But here I have surrendered it all to Christ. I can go any place now."

Two cases, one from West and the other from the East, must close the chapter. I received this letter from a woman: "Someone gave my husband your book, *The Way*, as a graduation present. It stood on our bookshelf gathering dust, unread. I lost my faith while in the university. I became negative and cynical and bitter. I trusted few and hated many, including myself. I became so negative and bitter that I couldn't live with myself, nor could I live with my husband, and our home was about to go on the rocks. I had no inner resources to meet this impending tragedy, so I saw no way out except suicide. I bought some pills and put them in a bureau drawer awaiting the time when my plans were perfected to take them. The day came. I went to the bureau drawer, took out the pills, and started to go to the bathroom to get some water to swallow them. As I went through the living room I tripped on a rug, fell against the bookcase, and your book, *The Way* fell from the topmost shelf at my feet. I thought that was strange so I picked it up and began to read it. In this book you gave the steps. I took them, there and then. I suppose you call it a conversion. At any rate I'm a changed person and a happy one. And my home has been rehabilitated." I saw this lady after-

wards, and her face witnessed to the change. "But," someone says, "that was a miracle. Why should that book fall from a topmost shelf at her feet on her way to commit suicide?" Well, I can't explain it, except that the Love of God never lets us go. It follows us down through the years. That Love followed her and found her, just before she went over the brink. Two things met there that day: Not-the-way—suicide; and the Way—Christ. Really they are the alternatives—Not-the-way is suicide, sudden or slow. Sometimes it is slow suicide—just the wasting of the powers, the disintegration of the being, the oozing out of life, the fading of hope and joy—it is suicide, sometimes slow, sometimes sudden, but it is suicide nevertheless. At the end of every road leading away from Christ is a precipice—a sudden drop, or a slow decline. But it's down.

The last instance of conversion in this chapter is reserved for a Japanese prisoner, awaiting sentence of death. A Christian woman, an invalid, made it her lifework to write to prisoners. Many were converted through those compassion-filled letters. Then someone suggested that she write to a prisoner in the Nagoya jail. She did, and he was ripe for conversion. He accepted Christ and became a changed man—so changed that he began to change others, including the woman who had helped to change him. He wrote to her: "Now that Christ has saved me, why can't He heal you? I'm going to pray for your healing." She was healed. Far from being a bed-ridden invalid, she now rides a bicycle. After his conversion and before his execution he read the New Testament through and became saturated with it. He was such a marvelous Christian that the church took him in as a member though in jail. When the day of his execution came he was given communion by the pastor who told me this story. He was calm and collected—and happy. He was given the choice of the last food he would take. He chose cake and the church baked the cake for him. As he ate it at the scaffold steps, he turned to the officials: "I'm sorry I have to

eat this alone. I wish I could give you some." Then he witnessed to Christ before them all with great simplicity and power—the only calm person in the midst of a jittery group of officials who saw the absurdity of a legalism which would put a man like that to death. He walked up the scaffold steps singing, "Nearer my God to Thee." When they wanted to put the black cap over his head he refused it saying: "I'm not afraid." When the trap door was sprung, the last thing they heard was the strains of "Nearer my God to Thee." Into the memorial service at the church they brought a bird which had been given by the prisoner to the pastor. This bird used to perch on his shoulder when the prisoner walked up and down the jail yard in his recreation period, and it learned some of the tunes the prisoner sang—especially "Nearer my God to Thee." At the memorial service they sang this hymn, and when the bird heard the notes, he joined in and sang with them. Here conversion had changed unmitigated tragedy into unspeakable triumph. Nothing could produce that except conversion—nothing.

But to leave this chapter on cases of conversion with this high note of a prisoner's victory would leave it in a category by itself—for a doomed prisoner and not for ordinary men who need power to live by now in ordinary circumstances. So we will look from a prison to a pulpit and see the need for conversion there. Dr. Don E. Schooler tells his story:

In my first two churches I preached all that I knew, honesty, faith (not knowing what it meant), good habits, church attendance, honor, and a continual exhortation to be "good," to serve God. I talked about the fruits without knowing the roots. Enthusiasm carried me in those days—enthusiasm and youth. These two proved not to be enough.

My wife's religion consisted of a belief in God, worship of beauty, a social and personal ethic, aesthetics, lovely music, sunsets, and nature appreciation. I believed in conversion, preached it, but did not know it. She would ask me questions, "How can I be

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converted?" I would answer what I had been told, "Believe, trust." But I could not put content into these words. I desperately tried to get the "feeling" I had heard described. All the time I was preaching right relations with other races, on the evils of bad social living, and the kingdom of God as a society of men who would make a good world—man would build the Kingdom! Later I knew that you do not build the Kingdom—you receive it as a little child, you enter it.

We had been married for a year. The marriage was getting difficult. My wife believed one thing, I believed another. We decided to study Jesus, without any helps of any kind, which we did with a small group for seven weeks in Canada. For two days we labored over one phrase—"God's will versus man's will." It began to dawn upon me that if I would put my will into God's hands (meaning that I would choose the highest in all situations) that this would be equal to doing God's will. Then I saw that Jesus was not asking for belief ("he that is willing to do the will shall know"). He was calling man to act, to decide when he knew the highest, he would obey it. I was committing myself to all of God I could see in Jesus, plus all of God that would be revealed tomorrow and the next day and the next. With this understanding I said: "Yes! God, I will do it. You can have me, all of me for that ultimate choice!" The light broke upon me. I wept like a child, calling out to my wife: "I have missed it. Utterly missed it." All these years I have preached only ethics, social and personal, but not the gospel. Why didn't somebody tell me? I have been so blind, so stupid! Urging people to goodness. That is not the gospel. The gospel was the living Christ who has come to dwell in me. He has liberated me. He assured me my sins were forgiven. He brought the light. He made me rejoice. For me, I had lived in darkness and naturally preached darkness. I urged people to strive to be good, to live right, but it only ended in frustration. Now from a new center and with new power all these things I had preached and couldn't perform or get others to perform, came back as a by-product of the gospel. It took about six years to get my new life in Christ and my liberal theology together. Some things I had thrown away, I now had to take back. There was a new center for all my

social passion—it was not centered in human striving—it was centered in Christ. Through His grace we could do these things. Fear is gone. Hope and joy have come. Power, in some measure, has come. I know that there is a good way through everything when I belong to Christ, that if one door doesn't open, another will. I know this because I know Christ and I belong to Him.

If someone says, "That's a minister and I'm not a minister," then we turn to this story from a Quaker mother:

It was at the end of your message when you asked us to make a new surrender. I didn't stand up, I just sat there whispering: "Oh God, Oh God, Oh God." Suddenly something broke inside. I didn't know then and I don't know now what it was. It brought tears. I went out shaken, empty. Almost at once I was filled gloriously with new life. I felt taken hold of, completely possessed. I had no hand in it. I was taken by surprise, almost as if it were happening to someone else. Never was I more convinced that the initiative comes from Him. To say it was joy, it was power, it was certainty—yes, all true. But these words are not truly descriptive at all. It was something so much warmer, sweeter, completely all-pervading. Every atom in me was alive, every faculty stepped up. I forgave the people in the company whom I had felt had wronged my son. I forgave everything and everybody. Next morning, I think the others here in the Ashram might have been startled to read my thoughts as my eyes traveled from face to face! For I found myself saying: "I love you, I love you, I love you." And now I am being given ways to express that love.

If someone still says: "It doesn't fit me for these accounts are from the older generation. What about us young people?" Well, a very able and attractive young woman, obviously made for leadership, but with an unsundered ego at the center of it all, came to one of our Ashrams in America. She saw that a decision would have to be made between Christ and self. Who would be uppermost in her life? She went out on a hillside and sat

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on a rustic bridge over a mountain stream and faced the issue. She picked up a chip and threw it into the water and said: "There goes my pride," and watched it float away. Then she threw in another chip: "There go my resentments," and watched it float away. Then another: "There go my fears," and watched that float away. Then she slowly picked up another—she knew this was it. All else was preliminary. She threw that in after a pause and said: "There goes myself." The last thing was gone. She came back on wings. She had lost her life and had found it. Bound to Him she was free. Surrendered to Him she need surrender to nothing else—she stood straight before everything! Conversion had brought personality—real personality. It brought leadership for now she didn't want to lead, she wanted to serve. Conversion had converted her, and that had converted everything.

CHAPTER VI

THE FRUITS OF CONVERSION

We turn now from cases of conversion to the fruits of conversion. In the very recital of these cases the fruits are obvious and startling. These fruits of conversion are the most beneficial and regenerative to the individual and to society of anything that has ever happened to the human race in all its long pilgrimage upward.

But are there no failures? Do they all become success stories? No, there are failures as there are in any high endeavor. Edison performed eleven hundred experiments, and they all turned out failures. When somebody asked the great inventor: "Haven't you wasted your time?" "No," he replied: "I've found out eleven hundred ways of how not to do things." Jesus told us that three out of the four efforts to get a harvest would be lost—some seed fell on the wayside, some on shallow ground, some among thorns. But one fell on good ground and brought forth thirtyfold, sixtyfold, a hundredfold. And thirtyfold is 3,000 per cent, sixtyfold is 6,000 per cent, and a hundredfold is 10,000 per cent on the investment. This is a big return, and not overestimated, for

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if you touch this person, he touches another, and he another, and so on, never, never to stop.

There are failures. A man in Lucknow, India, addicted to drink, left a puddle of tears on the chair as he knelt and prayed and repented. When he arose he said he was converted. The next day I was preaching in a bazaar, and I saw my "convert" staggering through the bazaar drunk. The very next day he brightly told me in answer to my question of how he was: "I'm still converted." When I confronted him with the fact that I had seen him drunk the day before, he said: "If you say so, it must be so. Good-bye." A Hindu jockey was converted. He stayed with us at the Ashram in Lucknow for some time. Then he said he wanted to change his occupation and asked me to get him a tonga (a two-wheeled vehicle) and a horse so he could use them to ply for hire and thus earn a more respectable living. Foolishly, I gave him the money to buy the horse and tonga instead of buying it myself. Instead of buying them, he went off and bought a race horse and entered it in a race in my name! I have never heard whether my horse won the race, nor have I heard from the man! We marked it up to "profit and loss."

In every high endeavor there will be failures and breakdowns. Some get a living experience of conversion but it hardens into a legalism; some live upon an experience out of which the content has dropped; some end in compromises and consequent spiritual sterility. After marking off these cases of failure in conversion, however, there still remains the greatest deposit for good left in the human soul by any influence whatsoever.

Starbuck, the psychologist, says after investigating a hundred cases: "The effect of conversion is to bring a changed attitude toward life which is fairly constant and permanent, although feelings fluctuate." Romanes, the scientist, adds: "In all cases . . . it is not a mere change of belief or opinion; this is by no means the point; the point is that it is a modification of char-

acter more or less profound." Dr. John Watson has classified conversions as "moral, spiritual, intellectual, practical." But all conversions have within them some of all four. The emphasis may be upon one, but there is some of the other three in varying degrees. For conversion is the conversion of the total person and his relationships. We might have added in the words of William James: "The universe, at those parts of it which our personal being constitutes, takes a turn for the worse or for the better in proportion as each one of us evades or fulfills God's commands." So the person, his relationships with others, and the very universe which surrounds him are converted when he is converted.

James again says that the only available tests of a religious experience are: "Immediate luminousness, philosophical reasonableness and moral helpfulness." In the light of these three things conversion shines—it not only shines, it glows! A member of our Ashram after entering into conversion said: "I feel like a glowworm."

The first fruit of conversion is the fact of an altered relationship with God. "He who conquers shall have this heritage, and I will be his God and he shall be my son." (Rev. 21:7.) To have this altered relationship with God—to pass from estrangement from God to be a son of God—is the basic fact of conversion. That altered relationship with God gives you an altered relationship with yourself—with your brother man, with nature, with the universe. Now the sum total of reality is behind you, sustains you, approves of you, and furthers you. You are no longer working against the grain of the universe—you're working with it.

The second basic change is the change of relationship to yourself. You have been forgiven by God and now you can and do forgive yourself. All self-hate, self-despising, self-rejection drop away, and you accept yourself in God, respect yourself,

and love yourself. "I'm going to love myself more," said a transformed person.

The third basic change is an altered relationship to others. I have mentioned a psychiatrist who says, "There are three basic attitudes we can take toward others—to move away from them, to move against them, to move toward them." The two first attitudes are cancelled in conversion. You cease to move into yourself, away from others. You give up your attitude of antagonism. "I've been resentful. I've had on my boxing gloves, now I'm taking them off," said a transformed person. The third attitude takes over—you begin to move toward others—in love. God moved toward you in gracious outgoing love and you move toward others in that same outgoing love.

Jane had been told by her mother that she was not good enough to find God. Convulsions began. A psychiatrist told her that she should write her mother a letter and lay her out, but she found, after her conversion, that she just couldn't. She wrote her mother a letter and told her she forgave her and asked forgiveness. She wrote three letters and got no reply. When she did get a letter the convulsions stopped.

The daughter of a mother who practiced witchcraft in Africa was converted. The voice of God said to her: "Go to your mother's house, clean her dishes, and tidy up her house." She did this day by day. Months later her mother said: "Why do you do this?" The daughter replied, "Because I love you." The mother was converted, gave up her witchcraft, and confessed how she had deceived the people.

There are two tribes on different sides of the Zambesi River in Africa—one ugly, the other handsome. They used to meet each year at a certain point of the river and fight. Now both tribes have been converted, and they meet at the same place for prayer! Incidentally the ugly tribe is the one that is more aggressive in evangelism. The point of that story is that the

moment they became Christians they ceased moving against each other and began to move toward each other in love!

Out of love, which is the first fruit of the Spirit, comes joy, which is the second fruit of the Spirit. There can be no joy if there is no love. The loveless heart does not and cannot sing. The loving heart sings automatically. John Yepes, the sixteenth century Carmelite friar, said, "The soul of man who serves God always serves in joy, always keeps a holiday, is always in her palace of jubilation."

An atheist, a Roman Catholic, and a theosophist arranged for me to speak to a South American audience. The chairman in introducing me said: "The reason we come to hear you is that you have a song in your heart, and Latin America dearly loves music."

The most bubbling Christian I ever knew was Rufus Moseley. Someone said: "The first time I heard him I thought he was crazy, but the second time I heard him I knew I was crazy." Someone asked Rufus whether Jesus ever laughed, and he replied: "I don't know, but He certainly fixed me up so I can laugh."

When someone told me that The Methodist Church had licensed a friend of mine to speak I remarked to someone: "That's like licensing the Niagara to run." "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks."

Joy is a necessary concomitant of the Christian faith. During the Madagascar persecutions groups gathered in caves and holes to worship. Such a group bursting with gratitude and love said to their leader, "Let us sing." "Brethren, I implore you to keep quiet," said the leader. "Our enemies are looking for us, and it will be death to all of us if we are caught." "But we must sing," they said in a low voice. So under their breaths these Christians sang. They sang in face of death! When some were thrown over a cliff to their deaths, they were heard to be singing while falling.

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The Christian is always in trouble—and always happy, incorrigibly happy.

A German pastor behind prison walls said he had no complaint to make, except that they wouldn't allow them to sing! "So we sang without voice! With our souls we did the singing, a loud resounding *Deo Glorio*."

Dr. Kagawa, although a chronically sick man, said, "I am able to go about as an ordinary person because I have joy—joy at night, joy in the daytime, joy in prayer."

A friend writes after a grilling day, or what would be a grilling day to anyone else—she had attended six meetings—"Tired? No, Jesus did it all. I just went along for a ride!"

Dr. Conner of the Veteran's Administration says: "Pessimism kills more old people than any other disease." Then real conversion is the most curative agency known. This from the Osaka, Japan, Ashram, "The Morning of the Overflowing Heart," "I came here with a heavy heart. My health has not been good. But this morning I burst out with thanksgiving. My health has been restored."

L. P. Jacks put it thus:

Christianity is the most joyous, the least forbidding of all the religions of mankind. There is no religion which throws off the burden of life so completely, which escapes so swiftly from its moods, which gives so large a scope for the high spirits of the soul, and welcomes to its bosom with so warm an embrace these things of beauty which are joys forever. Christianity does not brood over the sorrows of mankind. It is always music that you hear and sometimes dancing as well.

"The summons to rejoice is sounded no less than seventy times in the New Testament," says Dr. Sangster. No wonder Tertullian said: "The Christian saint is hilarious." Someone in our Ashram said: "My cup runneth over and my saucer too."

When Dr. Farmer, organist at Harrow, pleaded with the

Salvationist drummer not to hit the drum so hard, the beaming bandsman replied: "Lor' bless you, sir, since I've been converted I'm so happy I could bust the blooming drum." As Coventry Patmore wrote: "All realities sing and nothing else will." Conversion brings reality and therefore it sings. If there is no song in the heart there is no conversion. "Joy is the sign of spiritual maturity."

This joy is the outcome of the direct presence of Christ within, of a sense of well-being in Him and a sense of adequacy to meet anything that comes. It is the joy of strength. Isaac Abbott, after his conversion, though he had been addicted to drink, couldn't feel any change and wondered if he was really converted. He went out of a meeting and was met by an old pal who handed him a bottle. He took it and held it for a moment and then handed it back. He knew then that he was a new man. Joy was the result.

This joy through conversion comes from a deep certainty which possesses one in conversion. Jung, the famous psychiatrist, says:

There is no question of belief, but of experience. Religious experience is absolute. It is indisputable. You can only say that you have never had such an experience and your opponent will say: "Sorry, I have." And there the discussion will come to an end. No matter what the world thinks about religious experience, the one who has it possesses the great treasure of a thing that has provided him with a source of life, meaning and beauty and that has given a new splendor to the world and to mankind.

Kierkegaard puts it thus,

Essentially this is the everlastingly comforting thing about the forgiveness of sins: "Thou shalt believe it." For when the anxious conscience begins to employ itself with heavy thoughts and it seems to one as if for all eternity it would be impossible to forget—then the word is: "Thou shalt forget." Thou shalt stop thinking about

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thy sins; thou hast not only a right to stop, it is not merely that thou wouldst make bold to pray to God for permission to dare to forget it; no, "Thou shalt forget, for thou shalt believe that thy sins are forgiven." For when one has thus verily experienced what it is to believe in the forgiveness of sins, he has surely become another man. Eternally he is young.

When God forgives, He forgets, and He asks you to forgive yourself and to forget the past. God buries our sins in the sea of His forgetfulness and He puts up a sign, "No fishing here!"

Forgiveness wipes out the past and wipes out the sting of the memory of the past. He makes that past useful. Dr. Coffin tells us:

One of the conservation problems of recent times has been the use of old newspapers. Could not some process be devised by which they could be remade, and our forests spared to that extent? The most serious difficulty chemists encountered was to get rid of the printer's ink. But at length a method of de-inking has been discovered and they can again be reduced to pulp and remade into clean paper. Life imprints upon our minds a mass of stuff—some of it bitter, some of it false, some of it obscene, much of it trivial. By middle age most of us want to be de-inked and start afresh.¹

The big problem is not only the de-inking of the guilt and sin themselves, but the memory of them. In the divine chemistry of the blood of Christ both things are erased—the sin and the memory of the sin. For when we remember the sin we forget it immediately in the joy of remembering the Savior from those sins. He fills our horizon and we can't see the sins for Him.

In addition to this invincible certainty within there is a righting of relationships without. One of the first things I did after conversion was send back some money for pigeons I had

¹ Henry Sloane Coffin, *Joy in Believing* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1956), p. 126. Used by permission.

stolen. The Heavenly Dove had come, and I didn't want any memory of stolen pigeons to mar the wonder of His coming. Fred Smith, an actor, was converted and he gave his great Dane dog to a man to whom he had sold another great Dane, which he had known was sick. Another puts it, "My irreparable sins were washed away, but the reparable ones I have to make right. I traveled without a ticket, so I wrote to the Superintendent and paid it back."

C. T. Venugopal, mentioned before, often called "a sadhu (holy man) in government," was witnessing at a dinner party as to what Christ had done and was doing for him. A civil engineer took him aside at the close of the dinner and anxiously asked: "Would this work for me?" When assured that it would, he then asked if he couldn't find it then and there. The two men went into a corner and bowed their heads in prayer, and the engineer simply and sincerely surrendered himself to Christ. Something happened. A profound change took place in his life. Later he was sent to Japan to pass on a large amount of railway equipment—engines and such things—bought by the government of India. There was a big chance to pass inferior material and get a big rake-off. The Japanese tried their best to get him to do it. They offered everything—money, women, liquor. They got no response. They were puzzled. So they sent to India to find out just what he was interested in. They probably found out that it was God. That simple surrender of himself to God at a dinner party worked out an economic and moral contribution to his country. When he returned to India he was made head of the Department of Inspections. Men of moral integrity are indispensable. He has won his position, not by suppressing his Christianity, but by expressing it.

When Starr Daily, a hardened criminal who spent twenty-three years in the underworld, was converted in a solitary cell, while he was skin and bones and full of hate, something happened that made his keepers see the difference. They began to

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offer him food on the side from the officers' table and his reply was: "Sorry, I can't take it—I'm a Christian." He who had lived on dishonesty was made honest, meticulously honest overnight. When his home town wanted to honor its most distinguished citizen, this former criminal was chosen. It was not from mere sentiment that he was chosen. He had become their first citizen by solid accomplishment—rescuing prisoners out of degradation and despair and writing books that change and lift the soul of the respectable—a really creative personality. Conversion turned the muck and mire of human dereliction into the lotus flower of pure and creative character—sheer miracle!

This happens everywhere. Here was a man right out of the "Bush" in Africa, admitted to a hospital with an elephant tusk wound—the tusk had gone through him. He was cured and converted while in the hospital. When he was well he asked to be allowed to stay in the hospital and work for nothing to pay back the things his relatives had stolen from the hospital. A sensitizing of conscience through conversion!

An amazing revival is taking place in the Central Congo in Africa. It began when a missionary, under the inspiration of the example of Bishop Warne of India who took his clergy aside in a two-day retreat with the Acts of the Apostles as the basis of their reading and meditation, did the same with his African clergy. The revival began when a leading African District Superintendent began confessing his sin of having lost his touch with God through criticism of the missionary and asking forgiveness. This was followed by an African worker, under the District Superintendent, confessing to criticism of his superintendent and asking forgiveness. This spirit of confession began to spread and the revival was on. It spread from the town to the villages and now their confession meetings go on, sometimes all night and all day and into the next night. They were attended by four or five thousand people, Christian and

non-Christian. Some of the things they confess are startling. One man stood up and told of having an affair with another man's wife and urged the other man to keep his wife at home so she wouldn't tempt him! Another man had an affair with another man's wife and went to the witch doctor and got a love charm which was supposed to make him irresistible to the woman, to wear around his neck. When the village council told him he should not wear the charm he became resentful and killed some of the council and the woman's husband. He confessed all this and was converted. One man confessed to having a strong desire for human flesh and confessed that he had killed and eaten twenty-six people, some of the relatives of whom were present, and named them off. Would the relatives ask for revenge? No, their reaction was: "God has revealed it. Besides, he won't bother us any more since he is converted." The penitents go forward for prayer and pray till they have received assurance of forgiveness. Then they go around the tabernacle clapping their hands in joy. Witch doctors bring their paraphernalia and burn it in public, confessing how they had deceived the people. The Kings of the Forest was supposedly a beneficent movement; one of its purposes was to keep the chiefs in order. Two American bishops were taken in and made honorary members of the Order. When the revival struck the heads of The Kings of the Forest, they too began to confess their sins and to tell of their deceiving the people. They would utter a command that the spirit of "the father" of The Kings of the Forest would visit a certain village on a certain night, and that therefore everyone should stay within doors and there should be no lights in the village, but the next morning goats, chickens and anything loose would be missing, appropriated not by "the father" but by the heads of the movement! They also confessed that they had an idol pit in the forest, with the idol of the spirit of "the father" residing in it. When the idol would be asked a question it would shake its head, Yes or No.

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"Is so and so a good man and loyal?" The idol would shake its head vigorously in disapproval. The crowd would gather around the victim, menacing him, and would impose a heavy fine upon him—a racket! They further confessed that there was a man in the pit and it was he who shook the idol's head one way or the other. When those in charge proceeded to take out the idol and kick it, the people fell back in terror, crying out that they would die if they saw their "father's" face! When nothing happened they too proceeded to kick the idol. They were free! Incidentally, the bishops were evidently surprised to find they were honorary members of a not very honorable movement!

This revival movement has spread from village to village for three years now, leaving in its wake changed lives. The Belgian government was concerned about it, for it had great potentialities for good or evil, so they sent an official to make an investigation. He reported that crime had gone down, illicit distillation of liquor had ceased, education had gone up, and the people in general were more amenable to government. He, a Roman Catholic, was so impressed that he asked the Methodist mission to send fifty workers to a neighboring tribe where there was no Christianity. A Roman Catholic asking for Protestant missions! The people themselves become missionaries as soon as they are converted. They stand before the altar and pledge themselves out of gratitude to God that they will go back and win their own families to Christ, their village, their tribe, and then the neighboring tribes!

Their conversion is running true to form. Someone has said that when one is converted he has three impulses in common with all others who are converted, (1) An impulse to pray, (2) An impulse to worship with others, (3) An impulse to share this new life with others. These are the authentic signs of conversion whether in primitive Africa or in modern America. Where these three impulses are absent, conversion is absent. The first is an impulse to get into closer touch with God through

prayer; the second is an impulse to get into corporate touch with God and with one's fellow man; and the third is to share with others what has been so freely shared with him.

Conversion is a conversion of your tastes. The old desires simply fade out, and new desires take their places. The idea that a converted man is one who is itching to do the old things but can't is absurd. The new things have gripped and possessed him so that he simply doesn't want the old. It is the expulsive power of a new affection.

In Japan a man who was called "The Gentleman Pickpocket" had been sent to jail fifteen times. Then he was converted. His interests and tastes were completely changed. He began to work for prisoners, met them at the gate, and got them jobs. His work was so impressive that the Emperor made a decree canceling the order that he had to state every time he signed his name that he was an ex-convict; the police records against him were taken out and burned. The outer signs of the old life were not merely erased, the inner signs were too. Those changed inner signs showed in a changed face. His very face became Christlike.

Another young man in Japan, a delinquent, was converted and became interested in delinquent boys. He asked his father for a house, which the father owned, so that he could set up a home for delinquents. His father is not a Christian, but was so deeply impressed by the change in the son's life that he gave him the home. Now the boy has twenty to thirty delinquents in the home. That is always the pattern. In real conversion the saved begin to save.

Mamayundi walked seventy-five miles to the Wembo Nyama hospital in the Belgian Congo for an operation. She attended a catechism class and was gloriously converted in the revival. As she started to walk back the seventy-five miles to her home, she began to preach and witness to the villages on the way. She stayed long enough to gather converts and to set up a congregation. The Mission would send a teacher to this congre-

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gation and form it into a church. Then Mamayundi would move on and do the same for another village. The Mission would provide a teacher for that village, and Mamayundi would move on. She strung congregations along that seventy-five miles. She was right out of the heart of paganism a few months before. Now she leaves behind her a trail of changed lives—a trail of glory. She came to Lodja, a mission station, and she has done the same—she adopted a nearby village and is in the process of converting it. When she does she will move on! The same Spirit that was in Paul is at work in her, and it is running true to form.

This changed spirit is the fruit of conversion everywhere. I went to Assam in India and said to the cultured heads of the Christian community—men who were college graduates, B.A.'s, M.A.'s, and Ph.D.'s: "Can you give me examples of transformed lives as I'm writing a book on how to be a transformed person." They laughed. "Look around at us. We have all been transformed, for a generation ago we were head-hunters." The Hindu governor of that province said in introducing me: "The only jet of light in these Assam hills is the work of Christian missionaries. The houses of the hill people are notoriously dirty, but when you come to a Christian home it is neat and clean, with a garden and flowers and fruit trees around it. There is a feeling of self-respect and progress and hope." Conversion had broken the power of the dead hand of custom and fatalism and opened vistas of hope and progress.

Speaking of hill people, this story comes from Nepal, on the borders of India. There were sixteen people who had decided to become Christians in that country, which was closed until recently. Then legislation was proposed making it a prison offense to be a Christian. The missionaries explained to these enquirers very carefully what this would mean. Would they go on? "Will they allow us to take our Bibles to jail?" The answer was: "We don't know." "Well, then," said an old woman, "we

had better begin to memorize the whole New Testament. We will assign a portion to each to memorize, so we can have it when we go to jail." They were baptized. Then the legislation was rescinded! But these simple people had the authentic spirit of the martyrs of old. The fruit of conversion was courage and steadfastness and joy—in spite of! They were persons!

Conversion unifies and awakens the total person, and makes it go places. The principal of the Isabella Thoburn College, Lucknow, the first woman's college in Asia, Sarah Chakko, said before she died: "It was the prayer you had with me when I was about to quit as a teacher that brought the change. That surrender brought life together. I am the principal of this institution because of it." And what a principal she was! She became vice-president of the World Council of Churches. The principal of the great Allahabad Agricultural Institute, the pioneer in the new agricultural advancement in India, Dr. Azariah, was a confused young man. He didn't know what to do with his life. He said: "It was that prayer of surrender I made with you, as we stood in the garden of my father's home, that made the difference. I am the principal of this institution because of that surrender." The principal of the Ewing Christian College, Allahabad, India, Dr. Gideon, said, "I didn't know what to do with my life. I gave it to Christ while in St. Stephens College in one of your after-meetings. Christ put His hand on me. I have been different since. I could not have become principal of this institution without that new power that came into my life." He told me that the wife of Principal Chatterjee of St. Stephens College, Delhi, was also converted in that same after-meeting. And what a woman she became! The principal of the Saharanpore Theological Seminary told me that the conversion he found in one of our meetings made him what he was.

Here were the heads of five outstanding mission institutions in North India who traced the beginning of their rise to a conversion that brought life from chaos to clarity, from division to

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unity, from moral and spiritual impotence to power. Without that conversion they would have cancelled themselves out by inner conflicts.

These men and women rose to the top because they found through their own conversion that they could convert everything, could make everything into something else. This power to transmute everything into something higher is a direct fruit of conversion, and perhaps its most valuable fruit. Note the passage in Rom. 8:28: "We know that in everything God works for good with those who love him." This corrects the old version, in which it was said that "all things work together for good" and makes it say that "in everything God works for good." All things do not of themselves work together for good, but God does work for good in everything with those who love Him. Note it does not say "for those," but "with those"—it is a co-operative endeavor. God and we rescue some good out of everything that happens—good, bad, or indifferent.

The people of Enterprise, Alabama, put up a monument to the boll weevil. It ruined their cotton crops, and they turned to peanuts and became the peanut center of the world. They got rich out of calamity. They didn't bear the calamity, they used it. A leading layman in Covington, Kentucky, was on his back for four years, a helpless cripple, dependent on his in-laws and in economic need, bitter and helpless. Then he got hold of *Christ and Human Suffering*, saw he need not bear his suffering, but could use it. He surrendered himself and his suffering to Christ, got up from his bed and is now radiantly happy and is perhaps the most useful man in the city. He says: "Why the people don't even notice that I am bent over and walk with two sticks." His conversion converted his impediments into instruments, his difficulties into doors.

One of the most useful laymen in Oklahoma City is the man who founded "Chicken-in-the-Rough" restaurants. He had failed in the restaurant business, and deeply discouraged, he had put

his things in a car and started to go to California to begin over again. On the way his wife served him a lunch of fried chicken from a basket. They went over a bumpy place in the road, and a piece of chicken fell out on the car floor. She picked it up, handed it to him, and said, "Dear, I'm afraid I'm serving you chicken-in-the-rough." He pondered a moment and said, "We're going back. I've got an idea." They went back and started "Chicken-in-the-Rough" restaurants. They spread across the country and made a fortune. It took a bump in the road to bump them into a new idea and a new life. Now they dedicate a good part of their wealth to God and are happy and very, very useful. A bump in the road bumped them into conversion and an open door.

As I spoke to an audience in China I saw a poor crippled Chinese woman in front of me. I inwardly prayed that I might have some message for her. But she had one for me! She was so crippled that she could not walk on crutches, but pushed a small bamboo stool in front of her as she wriggled, almost like a worm, across the room. Her spirit was anything but that of a worm. She had been dropped as a child and her back broken and she was bitter and resentful, with a sharp tongue lashing out at everybody and everything. Then she was converted—really converted. She was awakened in body, mind, and spirit. She aspired to be a teacher, but it seemed hopeless. When she was sent to a school as its teacher there was a near-riot, for the people felt that her crippled body was a bad omen. When the missionary asked them to try her for a year they consented. At the end of the year there was a near-riot again when the missionary expressed her intention to move her to another school. "We've never had such a teacher," they said, "everybody loves her." The fact is that she was the greatest spiritual power wherever she went, winning more people to Christ than anyone else,

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missionary or Chinese. Conversion had turned frustration to fruitfulness. Without conversion she was a bitter, helpless cripple; with it she was a possibility and a power.

Conversion introduces you to power not your own. As one man put it: "I used to do things, now we do things," and that change is a change of worlds—a change from the world of self to the world of a self co-operating with God. Another in one of our Ashrams put it: "I have been living with an undertow, now I'm going to live on the overflow." He was living with an overflow pulling him forward. He had been living against the grain of the universe, now he was living with it. It made a difference!

The converted discover that they can do more than they can do, for they work with and through power not their own. Paul puts it: "By the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me was not in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them, though it was not I, but the grace of God which is with me." (I Cor. 15:10.) Those who think because we are not saved by our works we should therefore be expected to lapse into passivity—that grace weakens us—have missed the point. Those who get hold of salvation by grace work, as those who think they can be saved by works never do. They work effortlessly—and effectively.

This coming in of divine resources to live by is illustrated by this account:

I'd tried and tried to give up alcohol. I was constantly aware that it was getting a real grip on me. I knew I couldn't continue as I was. I had to go either up or down.

Neither my doctor or my husband could see I had any problem, but I knew I had a big one and was wondering if I should see a psychiatrist. Then I really prayed for the first time in my life. I prayed, "Dear God, You are the great psychiatrist. You can help me if You will but I can't do it alone. If You will, please help me from becoming an alcoholic. But if You want me to become an alcoholic, then all right. Thy will be done." From that day on I

no longer even wanted alcohol. My gratitude was so great that more amazing things began to happen. In thanksgiving I offered my services to God and suddenly found myself a completely new person. Selfishness, laziness, inefficiency, self-consciousness, shyness and ineffectiveness, fears, resentments, bodily troubles, even excess weight all dropped away, and I began to live as God probably had always intended me to live. I became very active in the church and was led to a wonderful church-related job. Where I used to hate work I now love it. Nothing seems too much or too difficult. There seems time for everything, and I can do things I never could before. Everything works together for good. And to think all this happened just because I finally and really surrendered my will to God's will! I was forty-two years old when this happened. I'd prayed before, but prayer had always been selfish petition, "Please protect me. Protect my loved ones. Make me a good wife and mother." Even in the Lord's Prayer I stumbled over, "Thy will be done," for I was afraid that God might take my husband or son from me, or do some terrible thing. Now I know that God's will is my highest good and the best prayer is always, "Thy will be done."

This period of grace in my life lasted for almost two years. Then I began to slip at times. I don't know what really caused the slipping, but I used the excuse that my minister had said it would be good for me occasionally to have a drink with my husband, or to have friends in for a drink. [Author's note: when a minister recommends that he is ministerially bankrupt, at an all-time low!] Although I was slipping into a life of reading about prayer instead of a life of prayer, fortunately I did not give up prayer altogether. Slowly the grace returned. This time I had to fight for it, to really put up a struggle. I believe God carried me over the rocky places at first because I didn't know the Way, but that He wants me to learn to walk alone—though not really alone since He is always there to catch me if I fall.

Here conversion changed a near-alcoholic, an ineffective, work-shy, self-conscious person into a person on top of her world. A simple prayer of surrender did it.

Your outlook, your spirit, your very being is changed by

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conversion. The man who was known as "the biggest grouch in Trenton," called up a friend in Philadelphia and said excitedly: "Everybody is changed in Trenton today. Everybody's different since that meeting in the high school auditorium last night when 'so and so' spoke. Of course, it may be that only I am changed, but everybody seems changed!" His world without had changed because his world within had changed.

This change wrought in conversion is seen in this young man who was serving lepers in India. When asked what difference Christianity had made since he became a Christian, replied: "It gives me a point of contact with lepers, a reason for serving them—I do it now for His sake." That "reason for serving them" made all the difference in the world, for if the lepers let him down, disappointed him, he could go on serving them and loving them for he was now doing it "for Christ's sake." In serving them he was serving Him. That motive persisted through response or rejection, through success or failure.

This changed motive in life, wrought by conversion, could make Paul write this very important sentence: "Be subject to one another out of reverence for Christ." (Eph. 5:21.) We all have to be subject to one another in human living, for "to be is to be in relations." But the big question and the decisive one is, "Why do you do it?" Some would reply, "From duty," "From necessity," "From reverence for personality," "From love of the person involved." Schweitzer said, "From reverence for life." These and other motives wear thin and become irksome in time. Paul here gives a motive that never wears thin and certainly never wears out. You are "subject to one another out of reverence for Christ." You do it for His dear sake. That makes it possible to submit to another without losing your self-respect. You primarily do it for Him and secondarily do it for the person or persons concerned. That motive makes it possible to serve anybody anywhere and yet be inwardly free from human domination, for you freely and gladly do it for Him. So you

can serve physical lepers or moral lepers and yet can do it without inner degradation.

Conversion converts your motive for life and work. It is the most freeing force ever loosed amid the inner tangled motives. It simplifies life and its reasons for living and its reasons for submitting to and serving others. It simplifies you.

A wife was tense and nagging toward her husband. He went away and his wife had a new chandelier put in during his absence. On his return he brought home a big ham, and when he took it off his shoulder, it struck the chandelier and smashed it. He waited for the storm to break. But the wife came down, and when she saw the wreckage, said: "It's all right, dear, we can get another one." The husband looked at her in astonishment and asked: "What's happened?" She replied: "I've been converted while you were gone." The husband was intrigued and said: "Sit down and tell me about it." She did, and he, too, was converted, then and there. A tense, nagging wife was transformed by conversion into a channel of love and good will. The contagion spread, and he and the home were transformed.

The fruits of conversion are the most life-giving of any fruit planted in the soil of this world. A well-dressed woman said to Dr. Charles Morgan: "Dr. Morgan, on a very wet Sunday evening I slipped into the back seat in Hope Church, Springfield. There were very few present. I was a sinner, and tired of street-walking in search of men, I came in out of the rain. You gave as your text: 'She only touched the hem of His garment.' I do not recall your sermon, but in the midst of it I saw myself, as I was, and as I could be. It burst on me like a flood. I heard a voice saying: 'Arise to better things.' I went to my lonely room and prayed to That which talked to me. I asked for strength and forgiveness and I received it. My whole life was changed, inside and out. I left Springfield for Chicago where I founded a home for wayward girls. Since then I have such homes in New

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York, Detroit, Denver, San Francisco, and Los Angeles." A converted woman converted festering places in many cities.

This trail of glory following conversion is the most exciting thing in history, barring none! I sat in a private plane in company with two men, one a wealthy businessman, owner and pilot of the plane, and the other a test pilot. Both of them had stories behind them—and what stories! The wealthy businessman had been an alcoholic. On one continuous binge of thirty days he had consumed approximately three pints of liquor a day—one hundred and fourteen pints in all. He was really a sick man—sick in soul, mind, and body. His nerves were beating like a trip hammer. Someone prayed for his healing—said a prayer and walked away. As this alcoholic stood there alone—quite alone—he was suddenly healed, healed in soul, mind, and body. His nerves ceased to pound; he was so natural he felt unnatural. He was so elated with God that somewhere in there he took off the braces which he wore because he had arthritis in his back. He has never been able to find those braces. He literally doesn't know what happened to them. The alcohol too dropped away—gone without effort. He hasn't tasted it since, nor has he wanted it. He is on fire with the love of God. He goes around in his private plane and holds evangelistic meetings. Everything is changed within and around him.

The other man, the test pilot, also had been an alcoholic, but had quit ten years before. However, when alcohol left he had nothing to put in its place, nothing but hate. Before alcohol had been his defense—he tried to escape. Now hate became his defense, he would not escape, he would fight and hate. He did. He feared everybody and hated everybody and got fear and hate in return. But he was such a good test pilot that he kept his job.

When he went up with this ex-alcoholic, the businessman, to test him for instrument flying, each was afraid of the other. Sensing something new and strange in his companion, the test

pilot asked to have a talk with him. Next day they sat for six straight hours and talked about Christ. The test pilot kept saying to himself, "What is the catch behind all this? Why should he, a big businessman, spend time on me like this?" When the businessman got out some books, the other man said to himself with sinking heart: "Now this is the reason he's spent all this time on me—to sell me some books." "But," continued the test pilot, "when he gave them to me, I was puzzled and moved. Then he said to me: 'If I were to give you a machine gun with which you could mow down your enemies would you take it?' 'Take it?' I replied, 'I'd jump at it, if I could get rid of my enemies.' 'Well,' he said, 'it's the machine gun of love. A sure way to get rid of your enemies.' Well, I opened my heart to it all. I let love take me over. And do you know, I have mowed down my enemies! They are all gone. They are now my friends. Love did it. My attitude changed and so did theirs." Then he added thoughtfully: "Do you know there was simply no way out of the awful dilemma I was in—no way except God's meeting me where I was, at the bottom rung of the ladder." The man's very face had changed, everything had changed, especially the atmosphere of the airport offices—hate and fear had been replaced by good will and confidence.

We turn from these ex-alcoholics and haters to a highly moral, respectable church member, perhaps the most prominent man of his rather large city, the head of a large manufacturing firm. He writes this letter to M. and me. I kicked him up in a breakfast meeting, but it was M. who tracked him down and got him across from a secondhand faith to a firsthand one—to a real conversion. He writes:

God has always been good to me. He started me off by giving me wonderful parents, He has given me a wonderful Christian wife, three fine boys, and even wonderful-in-laws, including a new daughter-in-law whom we love very much. He has given me a good

CHAPTER VII

THE EFFECT OF CONVERSION ON HEALTH

We have seen the effect of conversion on the individual and on his relationships. It is by far the profoundest influence that plays upon the human personality for good. Nothing, simply nothing, can be compared to it.

Does conversion have any effect upon the body? It would be strange if it didn't, for the body, the soul, and the mind are closely interrelated. Whatever affects one portion affects the whole. Sometimes the body gets sick and passes on its sickness to the mind and the soul, and sometimes the mind and the soul get sick and pass on their sicknesses to the body. The percentage of diseases rooted in the physical and those rooted in the mental and spiritual is variously estimated. Some, such as the Christian Scientists, would say that one hundred per cent of diseases are rooted in the mental and spiritual. Materialistic doctors on the other hand would say that all diseases are rooted in the physical. The truth is somewhere between. The American Medical Association is prepared to say it is fifty-fifty. Some

doctors are prepared to say that seventy-five per cent of the people who come to them do not need medicine. They are passing on the sicknesses of their minds and souls to their bodies, and they will never be well unless they change their attitudes toward life.

This connection between bodily states and mental and spiritual states has been there always, but it is now coming to the focus of attention. Daniel wrote of himself when he was confused and frustrated: "And I, Daniel, was overcome and lay sick for some days; then I rose and went about the king's business; but I was appalled by the vision and did not understand it." (Daniel 8:27.) Again he said: "I said to him who stood before me, 'O my lord, by reason of the vision pains have come upon me, and I retain no strength.'" (10:16.) Daniel connected his being "sick for some days" and "pains" coming upon him with his being upset over the meaning of some "visions."

Paul prays: "May the God of peace himself sanctify you wholly; and may your spirit and soul and body be kept sound and blameless." (I Thess. 5:23.) Some of the diseases of the body are not "blameless"—they can be traced directly to the attitudes of the spirit and soul. They are rooted in our fears, our resentments, our self-centeredness, our guilts, our impurities. The mental and spiritual can be blamed for the sicknesses of the body. Blessed is the man whose spirit and soul and body are kept sound and blameless—the man who cannot be blamed for any disease that might afflict his body. He is not breaking any physical laws of health and is passing on to his body no diseases that come from wrong mental and spiritual attitudes. He is "sound and blameless."

In Third John is this sentence: "Beloved, I pray that all may go well with you and that you may be in health; I know it is well with your soul" (vs. 2.) Here it was a pleasure to pray for somebody's health whose illnesses were not rooted in soul disturbance—he was not passing on to his body the sicknesses of

his soul. It was well with his soul. Blessed is the man whose illnesses are all rooted in the physical, none in his mind and soul. Apparently Gaius, to whom the letter was written, had a source of threat to his health from his environment. It was from Diotrophes, probably a thorn in his flesh: "I have written something to the church; but Diotrophes, who likes to put himself first, does not acknowledge my authority. So if I come, I will bring up what he is doing, prating against me with evil words. And not content with that, he refuses himself to welcome the brethren, and also stops those who want to welcome them and puts them out of the church." (vss. 9-10.) The threat to Gaius' health probably came from Diotrophes, an ulcer-producing type of person, putting everybody on edge, creating tensions and resentments by his egoistic domination of the church. Jesus said: "Take heed to yourself, when your brother sins against you"—"take heed to yourself." Take heed to your reaction to that brother's sinning against you, for that reaction may color and corrode your whole life. Your reaction to the other man's actions may be as disastrous to your health as the other man's actions may be disastrous to his health. A good case can be made for your wrong reactions—"Look what he did to me!" But good case or not, the results of wrong reactions register themselves in functional disturbance in your body, that may result in illness.

In every life, in every situation, in every church, there is a Diotrophes—somebody who rubs you the wrong way, a constant source of irritation and tension. What is the remedy? Well, John before he closes the letter calls Gaius to put his attention on a man: "Demetrius has testimony from everyone and from the truth itself. I testify to him too." (vs. 12.) This is a startling testimony about a man—he "has testimony from everyone"—a great achievement; but further and most startling of all—"from the truth itself." The truth itself was behind Demetrius, backed him, approved of him, furthered him. He had

cosmic backing. There was nothing behind Diotrephes, except Diotrephes. So he collapsed and faded out unsupported by anything. So John says to Gaius, in effect, Diotrephes seems strong as he pushes his weight around, but don't take him too seriously and don't react against him too strongly; the moral universe will take care of him, he is doomed to futility. The one to keep your eyes on is Demetrius—he is important, the sum total reality is behind him, the truth approves him. So for the sake of your health of soul and body glance at Diotrephes and gaze at Demetrius. If you gaze at Diotrephes you'll get an ulcer; if you gaze at Demetrius you'll become exultant. So alongside of every Diotrephes there is a Demetrius—one is disruptive and the other constructive; one is a blight and the other a balm.

If the ancients saw the connection between mind and emotion and health, the moderns are now seeing it more clearly. A generation ago the famous Dr. William Osler, speaking of a tuberculosis patient, said: "What's in his head is more important than what is in his chest."

Freud said that there were two basic wishes in human nature—the death wish and the life wish. Which one controls the patient—the wish to die, or the wish to live? That will decide his fate. This will to die may be unconscious. It may be buried deep in the subconscious. It may manifest itself as the will to escape responsibility, to evade the demands of life, the will to retreat out of situations. So many retreat into illness. Here was a woman who married an attractive man but who doubted her ability to hold him through love. She took to her bed through imaginary illness and died of her first genuine ailment twenty years later. Here was a man who was deaf. The doctor asked when it began. It had begun twenty years before when his wife began nagging him. "It was intolerable," he said. He retreated into deafness as escape, and it became permanent.

A Christian girl fell in love with a Hindu and wanted to marry him. Her parents, not knowing anything about the affair

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with the Hindu, made arrangements for her to be married to a Christian man. When the ornaments were being given her, she broke out in a rash around her neck, on her ears and her arms—the places where the ornaments would be worn. This conflict within the girl was revealed to a Christian friend of mine. She persuaded her to give up the Hindu, which she did. Three days later the rash was gone and in a week she was sent home from the hospital well. When she got rid of the conflict she was well.

A young man hated the work he had to do with his hands. His hands broke out in a rash. Therefore he didn't have to work with his hands! He subconsciously produced the illness to escape the thing he hated.

If many illnesses—probably seventy-five per cent of all illnesses—are produced by wrong mental and emotional attitudes, then obviously conversion which would bring right mental and emotional attitudes would be the greatest-curative known. It is.

A doctor in the Louisville Sanatorium used to tell his patients each day: "Is your religion and your love all right? If so, you will get well." Another doctor said: "Fear and resentment are at the basis of all neurosis." Conversion converts from fear and resentment and therefore saves from neurosis.

I quoted Dr. Spafford Ackerley, of Norton Psychiatric Clinic, Louisville, Kentucky, who says: "The purpose of religion is the creation of new life, the development of feeling tone, and the regeneration of psychic energy." Note the last, "the regeneration of psychic energy"—it turns the death wish into the life wish. A woman wrote: "My body has been drained by inner conflicts of all power to resist disease." Conversion takes away those conflicts and gives the body power to resist and throw off disease.

We are told that the pituitary and the adrenal glands keep the body in balance when under stress. If the stress is not too great these glands can redress the balance and keep the body in

equilibrium. But if the stress is too great, then the defenses break down and the body is liable to get any disease to which it might be prone. Stress then, say some, is the cause of all diseases. If this be true, then it throws us straight into the arms of Christ. He is the most potent and beneficent power that can operate upon the inner life and keep it poised and adequate.

In Moffatt's translations we read: "By all the stimulus of Christ." (Phil. 2:1.) "The stimulus of Christ"—what a phrase!

I read somewhere that if you changed the secretion of glands you could change a person's character. A good man would lose all moral sense and swear like a trooper. "That is serious," I said to myself, "then morality is not in the New Testament—it is in the glands, and we had better go out and preach the gospel of good glands." I was puzzled. When I asked a doctor it states of mind and emotion upset the secretion of glands, he replied: "They certainly do." Then I asked further, "What kinds of states of mind and emotion upset glands?" In his reply he mentioned the things that upset the secretion of glands and everything he mentioned was unchristian. I asked: "Suppose a person's glands were normal, and he lived in a truly Christian way, would the glands function normally?" He answered: "They would function perfectly." Then I replied: "Then, Doctor, we have Christian glands." He thoughtfully said: "I couldn't say anything against it."

Then "the stimulus of Christ" upon the glands would make those glands function perfectly, for our bodies are made "by Him and for Him." He created them, and He can and does recreate them to their proper usage.

When Jesus asked the invalid by the pool: "Wouldst thou be made whole?" the question was important. Many want to be made "well," but not made "whole." They don't want to be whole personalities; they want to be well of that particular disease, so they can go back and do as they've always done—pursue their own selfish way. Then they wonder why God does

not heal them. There can be no healing that doesn't spring from wholeness—the total person made over again. Healing services where people come to be made well instead of being made whole are a moral and spiritual danger and end in a lot of disillusionment and wreckage of faith.

A neurotic woman who had been in the hands of psychiatrists, and though brilliant, was a half-person cancelling herself out, said to me: "I get great comfort from the phrase 'trust in Christ,' but the phrase 'surrender to Christ' sets up an agitation within me." Why? Obviously it was because the phrase "trust in Christ" did not disturb her basic self-centeredness and gave her momentary relief, but the phrase "surrender to Christ," meant a change from her basic self-centeredness to Christ. She wanted Christ to comfort her, leaving untouched the basic disease—self-preoccupation. She wanted to be made well, but she did not want to be made whole. The agitation was the most saving thing in the situation. Had she accepted the agitation and faced it she would have dealt with the disease, but she preferred to accept the momentary comfort that trust in Christ gave her, and thus dealt only with the symptom. The surrender of herself and her problem to Christ would have upset her on one level—the low level on which she was living, but it would have set her up on a higher level—the level of freedom and release.

The stimulus of Christ is not a shot in the arm to pull you through a crisis—it is a stimulus to the basic necessities in us that make for health. Before we can accept His stimulus we must accept His saving. He is a Savior first, a stimulus second. He saves us from wrong attitudes and actions that estrange us from God, ourselves, our bodies, our fellow men, from nature, from life. He reconciles the heart of us to the heart of the universe. He plucks out the rooted guilts, the sense of estrangement, of inferiority, of fear, of hate of others and of ourselves. He cleans out the inner mess of condemnation and conflicts. He is first and foremost a Savior. Then He is a stimulus. Don't

try to skip over the fact of His being a Savior and ask Him to be a stimulus. He cannot stimulate a mass of unsundered inner conflicts. They must be surrendered. Once they are surrendered you are being subjected to the greatest therapeutic force in the universe—the stimulus of Christ.

The turning to “pick-me-ups” of liquor and tobacco, of drugs, of tranquilizers, of movie addiction, to the stimulus of “parties,” and excitements and “thrills” of various kinds, are cheap substitutes for the stimulus of Christ. They pick you up only to drop you down. The only thing that remains is a habit—an insidious, strangling habit which persists and grows amid the alternations of being up and down. The sucker is hooked.

But the stimulus of Christ stimulates those basic necessities within us which make for healthy, happy living. What are those basic necessities? We would name nine, called by an expert in human living, Paul, “fruit of the Spirit:” “love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.” (Gal. 5:22.) Now note the difference in the “works of the flesh” and “the fruit of the Spirit.” The “works of the flesh” are these, “immorality, impurity, licentiousness, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, anger, selfishness, dissension, party spirit, envy, drunkenness, carousing and the like.” (Gal. 5:19-21.) Now note the difference—one set is the works of the flesh, and the other set the fruit of the Spirit. The works depict strained, toiling, futile human beings working hard at attempts to have a good time, to wring out of the universe a momentary happiness. They are jaded, tired, run down, and frustrated. The works of the flesh are working badly. The works of the flesh are out of harmony with the real nature and demands of the human personality, hence they make the personality accepting them into a creaking, groaning, laboring, tired type of human living.

But the fruit of the Spirit is different. The fruit comes out of the very nature of the personality—the expression of its inner life. Hence it is natural and unstrained. The fruit of the Spirit

is the supernaturally natural outcome of the stimulus of the Spirit of Christ within.

Note, every one of the fifteen works of the flesh is not only bad—it is bad for us. Every single one throws disruption into the human personality—puts sand in the machinery of human living. Psychology would say as loud an “Amen” to that as does the Christian faith. On the contrary, all the nine things that constitute the fruit of the Spirit are not only good—they are good for us. Every one of the nine contributes to human well-being—in body, mind, and spirit. They put oil in the machinery of human living. Again psychology would say as loud an “Amen” to that as does the Christian faith.

Then upon what is the stimulus of Christ directed when it stimulates the human personality? That stimulus is directed toward those nine manifestations of the fruit of the Spirit.

But before the fruit comes, the root must come. The root is the new birth of the Spirit. The moment that root is implanted in us all our powers are awakened, stimulated into new interest, new life, new purposes, new reasons for living. The epistle of Diognetus has this significant sentence, “What the soul is to the body so the Christians are to the world. . . . The Christians hold the world together.” They held it together because they believed in life, believed in purpose, believed in the future—they believed! The new birth was a new birth of faith and hope. They were not in a weary round of meaningless existence. Life was alive!

When the stimulus of Christ produces that initial and life-giving stimulus, the new birth, then it is followed by a continuous stimulus upon those nine things which constitute the fruit of the Spirit. The first impact is the stimulus to love. It is well that love is put first in the list of the fruit of the Spirit for love is primary in human nature. To violate the law of love is to violate our own nature. The basic disruptions to human

nature, mental, spiritual, and physical, comes out of not loving or not being loved. All else is secondary.

I was speaking in a sanatorium as visiting chaplain during the Chinese-Japanese war. I felt that it would do the patients good and would certainly help China relief if I could get them to sew relief garments. I ordered the materials and announced at the close of a chapel service that they could get the garments and begin work. I thought there would be a rush from the hundreds of patients, who were for the most part sick emotionally and mentally but to all appearances were able-bodied and well, for they had innumerable hours on their hands between treatments. Not a person came. I was dumbfounded. I asked a doctor the reason for this reaction. He replied: "Don't you see? These patients are not interested in anything except themselves and their own ailments. If they were interested in something beyond themselves they wouldn't be here." They were sick because they were self-centered.

The stimulus of Christ breaks that tyranny of self-preoccupation and makes you think in terms of others—makes you love. Therefore it heals you. The self-centered are subjecting their glands to the stimulus of self-pity, of resentments, of fear, of inadequacy. Therefore their glands are functioning badly, functioning against nature; hence they produce upset and disease. As R. H. J. Stewart says: "Our whole constitution, bodily and spiritually, is framed for no other purpose than for the exact performance of His will." His will is "Thou shalt love." If we love, all other things being equal, we are well. If we don't love we are sick.

The stimulus of Christ stimulates the other attitudes within us, makes us care, produces love. Therefore it is the most curative impact which can play upon the inner life, and hence upon the body.

A businessman with various ailments went to a doctor. The doctor after giving him a thorough examination gave him a

prescription: "What you need is a new philosophy of life," and handed him a bill for three thousand dollars. He went home furious, called up a pastor, and sputtering said: "What do you think that blankety-blank doctor told me? I need a new philosophy of life. And what do you think he charged me? Three thousand dollars!" The pastor quietly replied, "I think he was right. That is what you need." The man replied, "Then what am I to do?" "Read something," was the reply. "What?" "Begin with *Abundant Living*." He did, and he was converted, soundly converted, converted from self-preoccupation to God-preoccupation and other-preoccupation. He was soon a well and happy man. He called up the pastor again: "I'm glad that doctor charged me three thousand dollars, for if he had charged me an ordinary amount I wouldn't have listened. When he charged me that amount, I had to listen, and it was worth it. I'm well and happy." The doctor applied "shock-treatment." He was shocked from self-centeredness to love, and was cured—by love.

The stimulus of Christ is a stimulus of love, creating love.

The second thing the stimulus of Christ produces within us is joy. Nothing is needed for health so much as joy. This was known of old: "a merry heart doeth good like medicine." The converse is also true: "a gloomy heart doeth evil like poison." A doctor used to go through the wards of a hospital saying to the patients: "Nothing tones you up like cheerfulness, nothing tears you down like gloom." The head of an Old People's Home said: "Depression kills off more people than any one thing. Among old people it is Killer Number One." This being true, Faber could say: "Cheerfulness is the first thing, cheerfulness the second, cheerfulness the third. The arrows of temptation fall harmless and blunted from a gay heart." Romanes put it this way: "A prolonged flow of happy feeling does more to brace up the system for work than any other influence operating for a similar length of time."

The stimulus of Christ upon the inner life produces joy—the purest, most lasting joy known, for it produces love. It is no mere chance that joy follows love in the fruit of the Spirit. For there is no joy without love. A selfish happiness dries up automatically. For a selfish happiness is based on happenings, not on joy which abides amid the flux of happenings.

Conversion lifts the inner guilt and the consequent inner gloom and is therefore the most potent influence for health that can be found anywhere. The joy that comes through conversion may not be expressed in elegant poetry in these lines, but one who has experienced it knows what I mean and agrees with it:

Fully justified I,
I rode in the sky,
Nor envied Elijah his seat.
In a chariot of fire
My soul mounted higher
And the moon it was under my feet.

The third thing the stimulus of Christ brings is peace. You have peace with God, peace with your self, peace with your body, peace with your brother man, peace with nature, peace with life—you have peace—full stop! It is a “peace that passeth understanding”—and misunderstanding!

A Jewish psychiatrist said to me one day: “Can you help me with a case? All she needs is an inner peace, an inner security. If she had that, she would be safe no matter what happens on the outside, and she would be well. I can’t give that to her. Perhaps you as a religious man can. I’m not supposed to believe in these things, but if you can give her this inner peace and security, it’s what she needs.” I told him I couldn’t, but I knew One who could!

The peace that Christ gives is the peace of adequacy. You know that you can not only stand anything that can happen

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to you—you can use it. In Jesus everything is opportunity. For by His power you can transform everything into something else. You are converted and hence you can convert calamity into opportunity, impediments into instruments and Calvaries into Easter mornings. Peace in the heart brings peace to the physical heart, the nerves, the very marrow of your bones.

I need not go through all the other elements in the fruit of the Spirit which the stimulus of Christ produces and intensifies—kindness, which is love in action in little things; goodness, which is love in relation to moral law, and the good turns out to be good for us; faithfulness, which is love with the wobble taken out of it; gentleness, which is love fulfilling itself—“is never rude”; self-control, which is love controlled by Christ and hence self-control. All other systems would have put self-control first, for these systems are ethical systems. The Christian faith puts love first and self-control last—a by-product of love-control. “The love of Christ controls me.” So it is Christ-control instead of self-control. Self-control is strained and anxious and tense—sitting on a lid; Christ-control is released and relaxed and is a spontaneous expressing of the depths, for He has them. We let nature caper! You are not a suppressed personality, but an expressed personality. You are healthy because you are whole.

I have watched the groups in our Ashrams at home and abroad come to the Open Heart meeting all tied up with fears, resentments, inhibitions, guilts, self-centeredness. As we listened to what clergy and laity, young and old, say about themselves we wondered if all the disrupted people of the churches were not gathered here. They were not—they were the normal run of church members turned honest with themselves and each other and frankly telling their needs. Before the end of the week they were cleared up and cleared out and were progressively gay. They laughed at anything—even themselves. A lot of them came lugging all kinds of medicines for all kinds of ailments and emergencies. Then they laughed at themselves for having to lug

them all back home again—unused. One man said: "I came here on a diet. I couldn't eat this, that, or the other. I go away eating everything—even wieners!" A pastor who had been having asthma and migraine headaches and ulcers for years hasn't had them since he left his conflicts and tensions at the feet of Christ.

People come tired and worn out and go through the strenuous program of the Ashram for a week and come out rested. If, as Hatfield, the nerve specialist, says, "we are only as tired as our minds," then when we "are renewed in the spirit of our minds" in conversion, we are re-energized, rejuvenated. Of one man it was said: "His life is energy on the plane of the physical and spiritual power on the plane of the spirit." Paul could say: "For this I toil, striving with all the energy which he mightily inspires within me." (Col. 1:29.) This amazing energy and vitality of Paul is seen in this passage: "They stoned Paul and dragged him out of the city, supposing he was dead. But when the disciples gathered about him, he rose up and entered the city; and on the next day he went on with Barnabas to Derbe." (Acts 14:20.) Note, "supposing he was dead . . . he rose up and entered the city"—on his own steam! He must have been terribly bruised, but he walked into the city from which he had been dragged—walked in as a conqueror! One would have thought that he would have fled from the city where there was so much murderous hate. He walked straight back into it, his head, bloody, but unbowed. The more amazing thing is this: "The next day he went on with Barnabas to Derbe." His triumphant spirit held him up physically the day before, but wouldn't there be a reaction the next day when the bruises and lacerations reasserted themselves in pain and soreness? No, he walked the very next day with Barnabas to Derbe! He didn't go in an ambulance, as we would probably have done, nor on a stretcher—he walked a distance of twenty-five miles! That is vitality—"the energy which he mightily inspires within me." It wasn't the vitality and courage of an exalted moment, for "when they

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had preached the gospel to that city [Derbe] and had made many disciples, they returned to Lystra [where he had been stoned] . . . strengthening the souls of the disciples." (Acts 14:21.) He still after probably a month had no reaction of fear or an attempt to escape the unpleasant—he went back and retraced the road over which he had been dragged out of the city, retraced it with head up and heart bowed with the deepest gratitude that a man can have—the gratitude that he had resources within to meet anything without. This was the stimulus of Christ at work in a receptive life.

That same stimulus is at work today. Two people stood on the same platform of an Ashram—one an outstanding minister and the other a little girl, daughter of a minister. She had a clubfoot. She walked on the outer edge, with the rest of the foot curled in. She told how she had come to the healing service, how she had been healed—her foot straightened—how she could now run about like the rest of the children, and how grateful she was to Jesus. Then a prominent minister stood up and told how he had had asthma and migraine headaches for many years, how he had surrendered his inner conflicts and himself to Christ at the healing service, and how he had had neither asthma nor a migraine headache for a year though he had been in a job which could have easily produced both.

Obviously the stimulus of Christ was adequate for two types of healing—one structural—the little girl's foot; and the other functional—the minister's asthma and migraine headaches.

There is another way in which the stimulus of Christ heals. He stimulates our love for Him, and this fastens us on the Positive, the Affirmative, upon the Yes. This counteracts and cancels all the negative attitudes of self-pity, of fear, of self-preoccupation with our own problems and pains. "The divine 'yes' has . . . sounded in him." (II Cor. 1:19 Moffatt.) Many are afflicted with "attention pains." A man had a slight injury to his knee. It would probably have healed if he and his wife

had let it alone for nature to heal, but in their fear and anxiety they spent the balance of their days attending to that knee. They upset the healing forces of nature by their fussy interference.

A minister, able, devoted, and eloquent, was always thinking about his own health. Hence he was always afflicted with various shifting pains. When I mentioned that I was going to take a trip which would require some climbing, he asked anxiously: "Will your heart and your arteries stand it?" My reply was: "I haven't asked them, and I don't intend to!" In Him I affirm health not sickness; affirm strength, not weakness; affirm victory, not defeat; affirm life, not death; affirm glory, not gloom; affirm Yes, not No.

When threatened with diabetes my Inner Voice said: "In Me you are well and whole." Note the "in Me." In fear, in anxiety, in myself I was not well and whole. I would have succumbed to diabetes. As long as I stayed "in Him"—in the Positive, the Affirmative, the Yes, I was well and whole. The "test-tape" has been the verification. I let in the stimulus of Christ which is always and eternally healing, but had I let in the stimulus of fear, of anxiety, it would have been always and eternally illness-producing! I would have fulfilled the doctor's diagnosis, "You have a mildly severe case of diabetes. It will not get better, it will probably get worse, and it will hasten your deterioration." That was probably true "in myself," but "in Him" the case was different. The head of the Diabetic Society of America, after examining me a year later, said: "You are not only fine, but you are extraordinarily fine." The five years since then have been the best years of my life—so far! When I began perhaps the most strenuous summer of my life, with the setting up of the eight Ashrams under the new regime (one in India and seven in America), He promised: "I'm giving you the easiest, the richest, and the fullest summer of your life." It was just that! It was easy, rich, and full, and the stimulus of Christ was responsible. "In Him" I've been well

and whole. Out of Him, I'm not well and I'm not whole. It is as simple as that!

There is another way the stimulus of Christ heals. The Scripture says of Bezalel: "I have filled him with the Spirit of God, with ability and intelligence, with knowledge and all craftsmanship." (Exodus 31:3.) The stimulus of Christ stimulates healing skills in doctors and surgeons and psychiatrists who accept and work by that stimulus. Two of the greatest missionary surgeons the world has ever seen were Dr. Wanless and Dr. Vail of India. After I had an operation for appendicitis, in which the appendix was only drained because it had too many adhesions to take it out, tetanus set in. I survived it by the grace of God. Six months later I went to these two doctors to have them take out the appendix. There I saw a revelation of the skills that come from the stimulus of Christ. I have seldom seen such dedicated energy. Dr. Wanless had as many as eighteen major operations for one afternoon. He went on operating till midnight many a night. He said to me: "I'm getting old now, I can't go on till midnight as I used to. I have to knock off at nine o'clock now." Young medical students said to me: "He runs our legs off. We can't keep up with him." That was the divine energy working mightily in him. But the case of Dr. Vail was even more striking. While shaving he noticed a mole on his face. Cancer! He flew to Germany and was treated with the latest method of cancer treatment. He came back with the German machines to use for patients; he himself was apparently cured. But six months later the cancer broke out again. This time he knew he was doomed—six months to live. What did he do? He went straight on with his operating on the needy people of India. He did so until the day before his death. He left the operating room when his body would no longer respond, took to his bed, and the next day was gone—gone to be forever with his Lord! I can almost hear the welcome: "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy

Lord." The stimulus of Christ kept him from self-pity, from complaint, from self-preoccupation, and made him the instrument of healing clear up to the end.

To sum up this chapter—we are subjecting our bodies to stimuli which make for health or illness. Every emotion produces bodily change for good or ill. Sorrow is accompanied with weeping; amusement with laughter; shame with blushing; fear with palpitation; anger with increased heart activity; despair with sighing.

Here is a list of headlines from various papers: "Headaches as Much Psychological as Physical"; "Life Stresses Tied to Arthritis"; "Love Conquers All—Even an Ulcer"; "Teeth Health Tied to Emotional Tone."

So you can choose which emotional stimulus will play upon your body—the stimulus of Christ or the stimulus of fear, of jealousy, of resentments, of self-pity, of self-preoccupation, of a sense of guilt.

How do we get victory over these? The remedy of the Christian faith is simple. Take the central one—fear. This penetrating passage gives the remedy, "Have no fear of them, nor be troubled, but in your hearts reverence Christ as Lord." (I Pet. 3:14-15.)

There are several ways to meet fear. These are the ways which I will call "good views." (1) Emerson says: "Do the thing you are afraid to do and the death of fear is certain." A friend of mine was afraid of electric storms, so after conversion she walked out into an electric storm and repeated the twenty-third psalm. The fear was broken. (2) If you are afraid that something will happen to you, let it happen. A woman said she was deathly afraid of someone's laying hands on her head. I forthwith laid my hands on her head, and prayed. She laughed, and the fear was gone. These are the good views, now listen to the good news. The remedy for fear is "in your heart reverence Christ as Lord." Surrender yourself and your fear to Christ as

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Lord—He is Lord, not the fear. Lo, the fear is gone. For nearly all our fears come out of a feeling of insecurity, of being inadequate to face situations, to face life. Surrender to Christ as Lord gives you the absolute security of belonging to Him who has the ultimate and final authority, therefore it can and does give absolute security. When you surrender to Absolute Authority then the tyranny of fear is broken. For there is literally nothing to fear.

Let the stimulus of "Jesus is Lord" play upon your life continuously and the sickness-producing stimuli of fear, resentments, and anxiety are counteracted and cancelled by this glorious positive—Jesus is Lord!

CHAPTER VIII

THE CONVERSION OF OUR WORDS

When we are converted on the inside we are converted on the outside too. It affects all our relationships, all our attitudes toward others, even our vocabulary.

Words have been minimized as being of little or no importance. "What you are speaks so loud I cannot hear what you say." This is true, but words are important. Jesus said: "For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned." (Matt. 12:37.) That passage must be set over against the other passage often quoted, "Not everyone who says to me 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven." (Matt. 7:21.) Both are true. The inside and the outside must be the same. For if the outer without the inner is hypocrisy, then the inner without the outer is also hypocrisy. If we are converted in our inner worship, then we must be converted in our outer works and also in our words which interpret the two.

Words are important, for words are crystallized attitudes and habits. When you repeat an attitude or a habit in a word it

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tends to fix that attitude and habit. All expression deepens impression. "It is a law of the mind that that which is not expressed dies." So there was profound meaning in Jesus' statement: "So every one who acknowledges me before men, I will also acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven; but whoever denies me before men, I will also deny before my Father who is in heaven." (Matt. 10:32.) If you don't believe in Him enough to confess Him, you don't really believe in Him. When the psalmist said, "Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in thy sight," he saw the importance of both. They couldn't be long separated. "They wondered at the words of grace that fell from his lips." "Never man spake like this Man." The Chinese have a saying: "Words are sounds of the heart." Into our words creep the sounds of our hearts.

If our inner life is full of complaints then our vocabulary will be a complaining vocabulary. Our words will drip with complaints. If we are inwardly critical we will be critical in our words and our words will fix the inner attitudes. Therefore one college campus has an open grave alongside one of the sidewalks between buildings into which students and professors can throw their gossip and their criticism as they pass by. Paul speaks in II Tim. 2:17 of those whose "talk will eat its way like gangrene." Some peoples' vocabularies eat their way into homes and situations like creeping gangrene. "Soft-buzzing slander, silly moths that eat an honest name."

But much of our vocabulary is not positively evil—it is just weak. We have no deep convictions; hence we say the innocuous. We are always taking refuge into platitudes, into nothingnesses, to escape criticism of ourselves for holding positive convictions. We skirt issues, agreeing with everybody—and nothing. We become like our words—weak, ineffective, a nobody. Preaching has been defined "as a mild-mannered man speaking to mild-

mannered people, in a mild-mannered way in order to make them more mild-mannered." This has enough truth in it to make it sting. In a New England church was found an old record of a church meeting in which a resolution was passed "to examine the squeak in the pulpit." There are lots of "squeaks" in the pulpit—then and now—weak, ineffective personalities speaking weak, ineffective words. Of Napoleon it was said, "His words were half-battles." Of many of us it could be said, Our words are half-defeats.

Conversion converts our words. Instead of defeatist words we use victorious words; instead of pessimistic words we use hopeful words; instead of no words we use yes words. Is this a species of talking big to cover up our littleness? No, it is the soul affirming the affirmations of Christ: "In Him it is the 'Yes' that affirms all the promises of God." (II Cor. 1:20 Moffatt.) When we say our little yes, it is the affirmation of His great "Yes."

Take this illustration. A Southern woman writes to a Negro woman who is filled with the Spirit:

You seemed to recognize my needs much more than I did, and your prayer group leadership was the final push that caused me to fall "smack dab" into the arms of Jesus. I felt a peace, joy, and power that I had never known before. As this peace, joy, love, and power grew I knew I was "in." At our first P.T.A. meeting I knew I was coming from the mountaintop to the valley. Our P.T.A. consists predominantly of people who are seeking limelight and worldly success and fame. "Getting something for nothing" seems to be their motto. As I sat there and asked God what to do, this seemed to be my answer, "Lonnie, you're going to have to change some of your attitudes; some old beliefs and customs are going to be given up; and a new disregard for consequences is necessary." As I reflected on these things I saw the "real" and in seeing the real I was able to completely forgive. Now I have put

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Christ in the place of the thing forgiven. Then I felt a peace that passeth understanding. Each time I fall, I seem able to rise a little higher the next time. It is so wonderful when I let the One Power and the One Presence erase the appearance of evil and put good in its place. At times it is so new and wonderful it almost frightens me.

Now note the change from the negative to the positive—instead of ending up in criticizing that self-seeking P.T.A. group she ended with, “Lonnie you’re going to have to change some of your attitudes.” She began with herself, not the others. She put “Christ in the place of the thing forgiven.” Then she even used her falls to rise higher. All the way through it was the Divine Positive throbbing through the negatives. Her vocabulary reflected the Divine Positive.

A pastor writes:

I was called to a home where the husband and wife were alcoholics and were then drunk. After pointing to them the way to God through Jesus Christ I said, “Now this is not enough. You must commit your life, every moment and hour of the day, to His care and keeping.” We had prayer, tears, and commitment. I then said, “Do you have any liquor in the house?” The husband dragged out a whole case of champagne, and the best fun I ever had was opening the bottles and pouring it all down the drain. Then I asked if there were any in the ice box and in his stammering drunkenness he said, “Yes, in the ice box a quart of Port wine.” I opened the ice box and took that out, and when I started to pour it down the drain the wife said, “Oh, not this.” I went to her and said, “Little girl, if you are going to give yourself to God it means everything.” Again through sobs and tears she said, “Yes, pour it down the drain.” And I did. They became and still are the loveliest, sweetest Christians anyone could ever know. He has become a Deacon in the Presbyterian Church and his wife a Circle Leader in the Women’s Association.

Now note that the pivot upon which everything turned was when she turned from "oh no," to "yes." The moment she said "yes," that moment she aligned herself to the Divine Yes. All else followed.

A crude example of conversion from negative to positive was this one. A down and out alcoholic came to an altar of prayer. He prayed, "O God, if you are going to save me why don't you hurry up and do it?" He looked around surprised and said, "Boys, He's done it." That phrase, "He's done it," is the affirmation, straight and to the point, of a change from the negativism of escape into alcoholism to the positive acceptance of God's Yes in Christ. He became a new man with a new vocabulary.

A change from a hesitating negative vocabulary of "I never knew him," to a positive one is seen in this account after Peter's "conversion":

Rulers of the people and elders, if we are being examined today concerning a good deed done to a cripple, by what means this man has been healed, be it known to you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead, by him this man is standing before you well. This is the stone which was rejected by you builders, but which has become the head of the corner. And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved. (Acts 4: 8-12.)

He said more in three sentences than philosophers and moralists had said in three centuries. His words were all pruned, pointed and penetrating. His vocabulary had been converted. All weasel words, all "ifs" and "buts" were eliminated. His words were so close to reality itself that they passed from words to facts.

It was this pruned and pointed vocabulary that cut its way

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through that ancient world of make-believe and built-up unreality and brought hope and salvation to the masses. The same thing must happen today. Converted men with converted vocabularies must confront this present world of words and make-believe and bring it to reality.

CHAPTER IX

CONVERSION AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

In an age of dependence upon knowledge to cure everything that afflicts man, religious education has tended to replace conversion as a crisis experience. All one had to do was to get more and more knowledge, about the Bible, about God, about Christ, about moral laws and codes of conduct, and all would be well.

The disillusionment about the cure-all efficacy of knowledge which has set in in many realms of life has begun to set in regarding religious education. We need knowledge—without it we perish. While we see more and more the necessity of knowledge, we see more and more its limitations.

In science we see that science is power, but we also see that science doesn't give you the power to use that power. A moral choice is necessary. After the war a speaker was speaking on the wonders of science in a cathedral in Europe. He looked up and saw a shell-hole in the roof, pointed to it, and said: "But this also is science." Science built that cathedral and science bombed

that cathedral—in one case constructive and the other case destructive, according to the motive behind the science. What is to be done with that power depends on a moral choice. The discovery of atomic energy is the result of prodigious knowledge. The discovery of the energy lands us in a moral dilemma—what will we do with that energy? At the end of every bit of knowledge in any realm is a moral choice—what will I do with that knowledge? The knowledge itself is not healing—the moral choice is.

It is pre-eminently true in religious education. The knowledge about the Scriptures, about God, about Christ, about the moral laws is not in itself healing. At the end of all this knowledge is a choice—how do I relate myself to this knowledge? That depends on a moral and spiritual choice.

Religious education should lead inevitably to a moral and spiritual choice—it should lead inevitably to conversion. But has it? Very often it has been substituted for conversion. The consequence is that the churches are filled with unconverted people. They know about God, but they don't know Him; they are informed about Christ, but they are not transformed by Him; they know about the moral laws, but are powerless to fulfill them. Trouble, opposition, temptation, meet them and they go down like tenpins. Their conduct is shaped more by the mores of society than by their knowledge of Christianity.

This knowledge of Christianity lacks contagion. Brought up under this religious education which is an end in itself, without conversion, the person lacks contagion—he seldom or never becomes a witness. His knowledge is moonlight instead of sunlight—it is pale, anemic, non-creative. As a result of this process of herding people into the church on knowledge the church becomes a field for evangelism instead of a force for evangelism. So someone writes on the topic, "The greatest mission field—the church," and, "The conversion of the church as the next step."

The Japanese church is a case in point. The name of the Church in Japanese is "Choukaï"—literally, "a religious teaching society." The pastor is called "Sensei"—literally, "the teacher." It is all based on knowledge about, instead of knowledge of. Hence the Japanese church is afflicted with a barren intellectualism. "I can bring people into my church, but after I get them I don't know how to make Christians of them," laments a Japanese pastor in one of our Ashrams. In the face of the most astounding evangelistic opportunity in the world the church is the bottleneck. It can only depend on its processes of information about Christianity instead of transformation by Christ. Since the church lacks that transforming power, the seekers drop away.

The Gospel says: "This is eternal life, that they know thee . . . and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." "Know thee"—not "about Thee"—knowing about God or Christ does not save, does not give eternal life—knowing Christ does. The difference is profound and decisive. You cannot know Christ by knowledge about Christ—you can know Him only by surrender to and faith in and obedience to Him. You can only know Him by conversion. "Knowledge about" leads to a secondhand faith; "knowledge of" leads to a firsthand faith. The one is verbal and the other is vital.

Religious education that leads to conversion and cultivates the transformed life after it is received is beautiful and beneficial. If, however, it becomes an end in itself, it is idolatry—an idolatry of the means. The end is to get you to a saving knowledge of Christ.

"The soul gets on by a series of crises," and if religious education doesn't provide for the crises of conversion then the soul doesn't get on. It ends in a stalemate of knowing, but never arriving. For arriving at a higher level is preceded by repentance, decision, surrender, faith, and obedience.

What about the child of whom Jesus said: "To such belongs

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the kingdom of heaven?" Is the child not in the kingdom? Yes, the child is in the kingdom, as a child not yet arrived at the age of accountability. The atonement of Jesus covers it. The child soon arrives at the age of accountability and soon knows whether it is doing right or wrong. Because it often chooses wrong, it has a sense of guilt and need and from that moment on it needs conversion. It gets out of the kingdom by sinning out and gets back into the kingdom by acceptance of a Savior.

Jesus said: "Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me." The learning "from Him" is preceded by taking on one's self His yoke—in other words surrender to Him and thus be under His guidance and direction. That means conversion. Then you "learn from Him," directly and immediately, and not learn "about Him" merely.

That mere knowledge does not heal one is seen in psychoanalysis and its comparative failure to cure one after prolonged treatment. It may clear you up on the edges, but you cannot be healed at the center unless you get yourself off your own hands into the hands of God. That means surrender and conversion. "Know thyself," said a Greek philosopher, and then perished in the knowing. "This is life eternal that they might know Thee." To "know thyself" may mean that you sink into despair; to know Him means you rise out of despair into a new life.

To tell us to follow "the Jesus way of life" is to call us to the imitation of Jesus. If before my conversion you had asked me to follow the Jesus way of life, I would have thrown up my hands in despair. I simply couldn't do it. It would have been asking a bitter fountain to bring forth sweet water; thistles to bring forth grapes. I tried that before conversion. Every day I would promise myself to be different, but every night I had to confess failure. When once I gave my heart and life to Jesus then the Jesus way of life was the only possible way of life. It was a natural outcome, for my life roots were in Him. To commend

the Jesus way of life to the unconverted is to commend a counsel of perfection.

The New Testament doesn't call us to imitate Jesus, but to surrender to Jesus as Lord and Savior. To imitate Jesus is to look on Him as a man—the best of men. To surrender and obey Jesus is to look on Him as Lord and therefore Savior. "Jesus is Lord" was the earliest Christian creed, not "Jesus is Example." He is Example, but not first and primarily. Primarily He is Lord and Savior, and then Example.

The five levels of life are these: at the lowest is the mineral kingdom, above that the vegetable kingdom, then the animal kingdom, then the kingdom of man, and above that the kingdom of God. How does life pass from one kingdom to another? For instance, there is foul mud in a swamp—it belongs to the mineral kingdom. It looks up and sees the lotus flower in its white purity on the bosom of the pond. That foul mud, seeing this white purity, longs to be up there in the kingdom above. How can it get up there? It may try the struggle method, asserting its will, saying, "I will be a lotus flower." It may try the method of education saying to the lotus flower, "Teach me about the lotus life. Maybe information will bring me transformation." Neither will-assertion, nor mind-grasp will bring it to the higher kingdom. There is only one way up and that is the way down. The lotus flower comes down and invades the lower kingdom—puts its roots into the mud and says to the mud, "Do two things. First, Let go your old life. Be willing to cease to be mud. Renounce being mud. Second, surrender your life to my life. Let me have you completely and trust me." The mud does just that. Lo, it is taken hold of by a higher life. It is lifted out of the old into the new, transformed, transfigured, it finds itself blooming in the beauty of the lotus flower. It is born from above. Except the mineral kingdom be born from above it cannot see the kingdom of the plant.

Here we as men stand between two kingdoms—the kingdom

of the animal and the kingdom of God. We are pulled between the lower and the higher. We can consent to be controlled by the lower or the higher. The kingdom of the animal is self against the rest; the kingdom of God is self for the sake of the rest. The kingdom of the animal is the survival of the fittest in terms of the sharpest tooth and claw; the kingdom of God is the revival of the unfit in terms of the redemption of the sinful and weak. The kingdom of the animal is life organized around the hunger motive with the love motive subordinate; the kingdom of God is life organized around the love motive with the hunger motive subordinate. The kingdom of the animal is a feud; the kingdom of God is a family. As we surrender to the lower kingdom or the higher we are born from below or born from above.

How are we born from above? We cannot get into that higher kingdom of God by struggling, by trying, by whipping up the will. Nor can we get up there by mere information about the higher kingdom. We need not only information but transformation. We simply cannot get up into that higher kingdom except in one way. The way up is the way down—that higher kingdom must invade us. Jesus is that Divine Invasion of us. He comes down because we couldn't go up. He offers us the higher kingdom as a gift, something to be received. You don't "build the kingdom," you "receive the kingdom" as a little child. "Let us be thankful that we receive a kingdom that cannot be shaken." Knowledge is a shakable kingdom; someone with more knowledge may upset your knowledge, for knowledge is relative. The kingdom is absolute, so unshakable. The relative must bend the knee to the absolute and receive it as a little child. That hurts our pride—religious and secular. Unregenerate knowledge knows no absolute. In its essence it is a humanism. If there is a God, there is an absolute. If there is an Absolute, there is an Absolute Kingdom. If there is an Absolute Kingdom, there must be an absolute surrender to that Absolute Kingdom.

That absolute surrender means the realization of the higher kingdom and therefore the realization of yourself in that higher kingdom. It is the surrender of the mud to the lotus flower, the sinful to the Holy, the imperfect to the Perfect.

Jesus, as Heaven's Lotus Flower, coming down into our sinful world, says to us: "Do two things: Let go being what you are and have done [repentance], and let me take you over and make you over [surrender and faith]." We do just that. We give up our dependence on our struggles, our self-righteous trying, and we surrender our sinful selves into His hands. Lo, we are taken hold of by Power not our own, and we are lifted and transformed and transfigured, we share His Kingdom. We are born from above. "Except a man be born from above he cannot see the kingdom of God."

Religious education can prepare us for this moment of surrender and faith; it can give us a thirst to seek what we see, but it cannot give the thing itself. That comes from a personal saving contact with a Savior, which in turn comes from decision, from repentance, from surrender, from faith, from appropriation. After one has accepted the gift, then religious education can cultivate the new-found life and nurture it, but it is no substitute for it.

The oft-quoted passage, "but grow in grace" is not to the point as a substitute for conversion. For it doesn't say "grow into grace," but "grow in grace" after you are in it. You cannot grow into grace, because until you surrender the old life and accept the grace and power of Jesus, you will be growing in an unsundered life, which means a self-centered life, which means a cancer-growth.

Therefore those who are brought up under religious education should have a public opportunity to repent, to commit themselves to Jesus Christ as personal Savior and Lord. It should be so definite that the person can look back upon it as a crisis and a conversion. I ask such persons seeking a new life to write

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in the flyleaves of their Bibles these words: "On this — day of ———, 19—, I gave up my old way of life. I surrendered my life to Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior; I am His forever; and by word and by life I will seek to lead others to know Him." Then I ask them to sign it as a life-covenant and life-committal. Many in afteryears have shown me the Bible and the covenant written there that made the difference between the old and the new.

This is psychologically sound, for the expression deepens the impression. Professor William James said: "When once the judgment is decided let a man commit himself; let him lay on himself the necessity of doing more, let him lay on himself the necessity of doing all. Let him take a public pledge if the case allows. Let him envelop his resolution with all the aids possible." If this is done secretly it can be renounced secretly. The decision drives in the nail, and the public confession clinches the nail on the other side. It is not easily pulled out.

Joining the church and confirmation are good, but these may become something in lieu of conversion; then they are not good—they may be spiritually disastrous, letting the person settle down, this side of conversion. In this case they become the spiritually anemic type of persons filling our churches—noncontagious, bowled over by suffering and sorrow, with just enough religion to set up an irritation. They try to make of a halfway house a home. They are a dead weight to the progress of the kingdom. They represent a flattened out type of Christianity, expecting and seeing no miracle of change in themselves or others, no Christian expression except attending church and working on committees to keep the creaking, because oilless, machinery of church activities going. It is all duty-ridden and joyless and inadequate for this business of living.

Religious education without conversion is like a course in marriage relations without marriage.

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We turn now to the most important question about conversion—How? A lawyer came up to me at the close of a meeting, grasped my hand as in a vise and said, “Man, how?” A man said he had been educated by six words, “What?” “When?” “Where?” “Why?” “How?” and “Whither?” In this list for us the most important is “How?” For at this place many are weak, including ministers. A layman went to a prominent minister and said: “Doctor, you know everything about Christianity, except how to make a man a Christian.” The minister said nothing, for he knew it was true. We know the “What?” and the “Why?” but are weak on the “How?”

A little girl of eight, the daughter of American missionaries in the Belgian Congo, came to my room in their home and said: “May I ask you a question? What does it take to be a Christian?” I replied very simply: “Daughter, it takes you.” That was to the point and true, but perhaps it needs elaboration. There are steps up to the surrender of the “you.”

Setting up a saving relationship with Christ is not essentially

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different from setting up a warm human friendship. In the latter the steps are five: (1) The stage of drawing near. This is the tentative, explorative stage. You are not certain whether you want to give yourself inwardly to the other person. It is the stage of yes and no. (2) The stage when there is the inward decision to give yourself to the other person—the stage of decision. (3) You implement the decision—you actually make the inward surrender to the other person. (4) Having given to the other person, you are now free to take from that person. There is an exchange of selves—you belong to that person, and that person belongs to you. You are one. (5) There is a continuous mutual adjustment of mind to mind, will to will, and being to being down through the years. The friendship unfolds.

Now apply these steps to the finding of a saving relationship with Christ.

1. The stage of drawing near. That stage may stretch over years, or it may be over in a very short time. A very prominent pastor pulled me aside at the close of a meeting and said: "You've got to help me straighten this thing out. I've been resisting the Holy Spirit. I've been afraid of it. But I see it is my birthright." When I told him the Holy Spirit would make him like Christ if He came within, he remarked: "That makes it different, I want to be like Him." When I suggested that we pray about it, and bowed my head, he interrupted me, "You needn't. He's already come!" From resistance to reception in three minutes is quick work. But usually the drawing near stage is drawn out, but not drawn out from God's side. There is a difference here between human friendship and the Divine relationship. In the human friendship there is usually a hesitation on one side, or the other, or both—not so with God. All the hesitations are on our side. When Jesus on the cross cried: "It is finished," He didn't mean He was finished, done for, dead. He meant that the thing which He came to do was finished—

salvation was finished, the way was open on God's side, for He had borne our sins in His own body on a tree. Redemption was complete, only awaiting our taking. You do not have to find God—you have to allow Him to find you. All religions teach man's search for God—the Gospel teaches God's search for man. Therefore there are many religions, there is but one Gospel. You do not find God at the topmost rung of the ladder of worthiness, having climbed it rung by rung. You find Him at the bottommost rung of the ladder. He comes down the ladder in incarnation to us and offers us salvation, not as those worthy of it, but as sinners. "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners." He offers us redemption in a nail-pierced hand—offers it *free*! In a retreat, a mimeographed copy of a sheet, "How to be worthy of finding God," was passed out. That sheet unconsciously stepped from the Christian approach to salvation to the non-Christian. All the non-Christian approaches to salvation are striving to be worthy, by disciplines, by techniques, by thought forms, by various methods of austerity. It is man's attempt to lift himself to God—egocentric attempts at salvation. They never arrive. They are always on the way, always wistful, always seeking, never finding. It is always just beyond their finger tips. The Hindu inquirer saw the light in a flash when he read in one of my books: "Is the Gospel a demand or an offer?" When I came out flat-footedly: "It is an offer"—the gift of God, he saw the essential difference between Hinduism and all other non-Christian systems—they are all a demand. The impersonal Brahma does not do one single thing to help you up the ladder of worthiness. At the topmost rung of the ladder He passively awaits your being merged in Him! "He" . . . "Him"? No, "It." Salvation is man's achievement, but man never achieves it—except in thought, a philosophical system, never an experimental fact. A famous swami who was supposed to have arrived at God-realization said to a friend of mine in a moment of confidence, in answer to my friend's question as to whether he

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had arrived: "No, I'm a sinner." At that moment he was nearer salvation than in all his years of austerity—if he had only known it!

You do not have to find God—you have to put yourself in the way of being found by God. He is seeking you. No one is further than one step from God, and that one step is turning around. When you do that you are in the arms of the seeking God. No one is further than one word from God; that one word is "Yes!" When you say it, deep down, you're "in." Jesus is "the Way," and if you are in a hole, then that Way stretches right down beneath your feet. All you have to do is to turn around by repentance and faith and begin walking on the Way! If you are in "hell" then the Way extends down there too—"He descended into hell"—and you can turn around and begin to walk on the Way out of hell. All the barriers are down on God's side. If there are any barriers they are all on our side—all!

2. The stage of decision—the stage when you inwardly decide to be His. Sometimes your motives and your methods of arriving at the decision may be mixed. A young man in India said to me: "I couldn't make up my mind. I went into the church, and I came out. I was in a blue funk. Finally I took a coin and said: 'Heads I give my heart to God, tails I won't.' I tossed the coin and it fell 'heads,' and I came in and gave my heart to God." Poor method of choice, but he had probably always depended on something in his environment to make his choices for him, and when it came to the supreme crisis he fell back on his life habit. God will accept you, mixed motives and all, and He will then purify you and your motives. Don't pick your motives to pieces and get stalled on them. Come as you are—"Just as I am"—but come.

3. You implement the decision—you actually surrender your life to Christ. How is that done? Well, how do you surrender your life to another, say to a life mate? There is nothing weighed out or measured, nothing that the eye can see, but inwardly

you say: "I belong to that person." The one thing you own and the only thing you own is just yourself. It is the one and only thing you will take out of this world with you—you cannot take your money, your home, or your loved ones, nothing but yourself. It is the only thing you own. Then you can decide to whom that self shall belong—to yourself? In which case you become a self-centered person, hence disrupted. To the herd? In which case you become an echo, not a voice, a thing not a person, a nonentity. To money? In which case you become an insecure person with the insecurity of your money—you go up and down with it. To sex? In which case you become a sex-dominated person—a person of lust, hence disgust. Don't think that if you don't belong to Christ you are free. Nobody is free. We are free only to choose our own masters. It is Christ, or something else, that will rule us. When you say deep down, "I belong to Him," then you do. Here there can be no "ifs" and "buts"—it must be unequivocal. "I belong to Him"—full stop. Sink or swim, survive or perish, for life and for death, feeling or no feeling—I belong to Him!

4. Now having given yourself to Christ you are thereby emboldened to take from Christ forgiveness, grace, power, love—everything, especially Himself. The emphasis is upon "Himself," for when you have Him you have forgiveness, grace, power, love, everything.

Someone told a seeker, "When two people are really married they stand there and pledge each other their vows. The heavens don't open, but they believe what they have said and done, and they act on it and begin to live it out." That is sound and workable, for the commitment opens the doors to verification—the living of life out together is a constant verification that you're married and belong to each other.

The surrender produces faith, and faith is pure receptivity. Faith is welcoming that which you believe in. Faith—Forsaking All I Take Him—F-A-I-T-H. Faith is acceptance. "When were

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you converted?" was asked of Kolddrugghe. He replied: "At Golgotha." This was a half-truth. When was Peter filled with the Holy Spirit? When Joel said: "It shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit"? Potentially yes, actually when he could say, "This is that." When were you fed? When God created wheat? No, when you appropriated the created wheat and made it your own. So "faith is an affirmation and an act that bids eternal truth be fact." It is acting "as if" and finding that it "is." Through faith the promise becomes performance.

How shall I know? What are the steps in assurance? Certainly on such an important matter there should be assurance. There is! You don't have to live in the foggy land of "I hope so," and "perhaps." You can know and know now. Assurance comes through five ways:

First, The Word of God assures you in every line that "him that cometh to me I shall in no wise cast out." There are thirty-three thousand promises in the Bible, and they all, like rays of light through a prism, converge on this assurance and set the heart burning with the sense of certainty. That sense of certainty is not the same in any two people. When someone asked an African how he knew he was saved, he replied: "A cool breeze is blowing through my heart." Expose yourself to these promises of God in the Word and let their cool breezes blow through your heart. The ten lepers who asked Jesus to heal them were told by Him to go and show themselves to the priests to get a certificate that they were well. They started! They started with nothing but the naked word of Jesus. The account says: "As they went they were healed."—"As they went!" The character of Jesus was behind His words, so they walked out upon His words to healing. The character of God is behind the promises in the Scriptures. Walk out on them. They will never let you down. "He who calls you is faithful, and he will do it."

Second, Those of us who have tried it assure you. There is a collective witness. I have traveled amid all nations, races, and classes for half a century, and the most amazing thing I have found in those travels has been the way all Christians, in all lands, when they are truly Christian, have a common language—the language of certainty, of assurance. They may be just out of cannibalism, or out of the inheritance of centuries of culture, but the language is the same. There has been no possibility of collusion, of being primed witnesses. It was out of reality and they all spoke the same thing—he saved me! In my Round Table Conference where we gather together the best representatives of the various faiths and ask them to tell what their faiths are doing for them in experience, there has been one result and only one result. Those in touch with Christ were finding something, and those not in touch with Him were not. Sometimes they interpret this in a very interesting way. As a Muslim walked home with me from one of those Round Table Conferences, he said: “We Muslims and Hindus in that Conference must have been more sincere and honest than you Christians.” When I asked him why he thought so, he replied: “Well, all of us Muslims and Hindus said we had found nothing, and all of you Christians said you had found something. Therefore we must have been more honest and sincere than you were.” I replied: “That’s one interpretation. The other is that Jesus is the Way.” And He is! For wherever men sincerely expose their inner beings to Him in surrender and faith and obedience then an invincible certainty of release and freedom and salvation takes possession of them. That collective witness is the most impressive thing in history—barring none. People of all eras of history, of all races, of all ages, of both sexes, of all cultures, tell the same thing in varying languages and accents. “I know Him whom I have believed. He is my Savior, for He saves me now from what I don’t want to be to what I want to be.” Life verifies it.

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Third, your *heightened moral power* will assure you that you belong to Him. You will be able to stand up under temptations and say no to evil. You will no longer be a moral rag, but a moral ramrod standing straight before everything. T. R. Glover tells of an agnostic friend who undertook to save a drunkard in order to prove that a man's habits could be transformed without the aid of religion. The man was so weak that he was unable to pass a tavern unless someone had hold of his arm. If his guardian went to London for a day he immediately went out and got drunk. One day Dr. Glover met the agnostic and asked about the drunken friend. "Oh," was the reply, "I was getting along fairly well with the job when a lot of rough people with red jerseys arrived with an atrocious brass band. Somehow these repulsive fellows got hold of him. I don't know exactly what happened, but they seemed to have made him kneel down and pray. Anyhow, he can walk past a tavern by himself now." Your heightened moral powers will witness that you have Him and He has you.

A Chinese school girl was converted in one of my meetings in Malaya. She was the daughter of wealthy Confucian parents, and she risked all in taking her stand. She risked being disinherited. Another wealthy Chinese threw a check for a million dollars on the table before her and said it was hers if she would become his second wife. She walked out of the room and left the million-dollar check lying there. Poverty with Christ was chosen rather than plenty in a non-Christian home. Now she is the wife of the Christian head of one of the largest Chinese schools in Singapore and their daughter is named Eunice, after our daughter. Her heightened moral powers proved Christ was within.

Here was a man on fire for Christ. He had been a rotter, but he was a master salesman. He had sold thirteen cars on New Year's Eve. He went to a party to celebrate the New Year. He came home at daybreak after a night of carousal. When he

woke up at nine God said to him: "There is no difference between a fool and one who acts like one." That got him. He replied: "Well, I'm for Jesus Christ." He called his wife and said: "Little girl, you'll have no more trouble with this man." She believed it. She herself was converted a year later. All his brothers were also converted. He won a wealthy television station owner—a man who had put off the ministers with gifts lest they get to his soul. He got him for Christ.

A little girl recently was converted. How did she know she was converted? "Well," she said, "I used to blow my top when my brother teased me, but now I don't even feel like blowing my top."

When a Japanese businessman was converted and was asked about what change it had made, he replied: "My workmen are no longer mad at me, for I'm no longer mad at them. I was the cause of the sullenness."

Fourth, *The Spirit will witness directly with your spirit that you are converted.* "When we cry 'Abba! Father!' it is the Spirit bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God." (Rom. 8:16.) Note it doesn't say "the Spirit bearing witness to our spirit," but "*with* our spirit." Our spirit and the Holy Spirit bear witness to the same thing—a double witness. The Spirit bears witness to the spirit whose heightened moral powers also bear witness. This is the witness from above and from below—God and man corroborate each other's witness. Nothing can be stronger and more satisfying. The saved soul is sure with an invincible certainty.

This coming of the witness of the Spirit may be as gradual as a sunrise or as sudden as a lightning flash. In either case it is faith that is the spark. In a thunderstorm a tiny spark rises from the earth. It is met by the flash from above and the loud clap of thunder. Our tiny spark of faith rises to God and looses His power. That spark may arise spontaneously from within or be precipitated from without. In a Prayer Vigil I took over

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from a woman who was seeking to surrender herself. I walked up the aisle of the chapel from behind her and said: "I'm taking over now." She had been in prayer to surrender herself and when I said that, she transferred it to Christ and looked up at me and smiled a joyous smile and said: "He has taken over." In India a missionary was seeking the Holy Spirit, and we were awaiting the visit of a British head official in that Himalayan mission station. I looked up and saw the official and his retinue coming around the bend of the mountain. I said: "He has come," and the missionary, thinking more of the coming of the Holy Spirit than of the official, said: "Yes, He has come." The Holy Spirit had come!

No two approaches and no two assurances are alike. Just as no two love affairs are alike, each unique, so no two conversions are alike. Each is always unique. Bryan Green said:

People will pass through the line [of love] in one of three ways. There may be a sudden, dramatic discovery of love at first sight, a sudden awareness of each other as indispensable. For another, there may be several attempts and struggles before he crosses the line; he thought he loved, but he didn't, or else met with no response; what he had was real as far as it went, but it wasn't that true love experience which lifted him above the imaginary line. For others the crossing of the line is entirely different: they have known each other in boy and girl friendship from childhood. One day they discover they are in love and are over the line. Obviously three consequences inevitably follow. Such people have found a definite experience: "We love." They are conscious of what they have found: "We know we love." And they can never be the same afterwards: "Let's get married."¹

However conversion comes, these three movements can be discerned in the process of all conversions: (1) Mental conflict;

¹ *The Practice of Evangelism*, p. 35. Used by permission of Charles Scribner's Sons and Hodder and Stoughton Ltd.

(2) Emotional crisis; (3) Resolution of the conflict. There is mental conflict in all conversions. Conversion demands conversion upwards. The "ought-to-be" stands over against the "is" and demands change. That is disturbing, for it means an alteration of life and its plans and purposes. That means emotional disturbance. It is called "conviction." Sometimes the soul gets hung up at that stage and never passes on to conversion. Aaron Burr did. In a revival in Princeton University he came under conviction. He went to the president who advised him to wait till the excitement died down. This was fatal advice. Burr did. Torn by this unresolved conviction, he said to Christ, "If you let me alone, I'll let you alone." Aaron Burr came within one vote of the presidency of the United States, but he died in disgrace, unwept and unsung. The citizens of his home town would allow no tombstone to be put up in the graveyard, but someone stole in at night and put up a simple marker, "Aaron Burr." That was all. As I stood there beside that marker I said to myself, "If he had only passed from conviction to conversion, what might he not have been?"

Sir J. Stephens in his essay says: "There is a natural history of religious conversions. It commences with melancholy, advances through contrition to faith, is then conducted to tranquility and after a while to rapture, and subsides at length into an abiding consolation and peace."

And all this may occur in a supreme moment of time. J. A. Hutton says of Browning: "His impassioned confidence that the soul may, in one grand moment, leap sheer out of any depth of shame or subtle bondage, and leap to the breast of God." Or, as Professor Corson says of the poetry of Browning: "Not through knowledge, not through a sharpened intellect, but through conversion, through wheeling into a new centre its spiritual system, the soul attains to saving truth."²

² Jackson, *op. cit.*, pp. 159, 163.

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The center of conversion is the conversion of the will. Note that the prodigal son said: "I will arise . . . I will go . . . I will say . . . I have sinned"—it is all centered in the will.

We appeal to that last, lamed soul, trembling on the verge of decision to be converted, to take these steps: (1) Turn toward yourself and your past—take a good look at your life and its directions. That is review. (2) Turn from your past ways of life. That is repentance. (3) Turn yourself and your sins over to Jesus Christ. That is surrender. (4) Turn toward Him in faith and acceptance of forgiveness and a new life. That is receptivity. (5) Turn toward all your relationships and change them in the light of this new dawning light. That is restitution. (6) Turn with Him and face toward life and its future. That is life committal. (7) Turn your thoughts each night before you drop off to sleep and each morning when you awaken to this sentence, saying it to yourself: "In Him who strengthens me I am able for anything." That is faith rejoicing in its Redeemer and His power for anything!

When you are with Christ, facing life together you are saved. A grandfather was out taking a walk with his grandson. "How far are we from home?" he asked the grandson. "Don't know," was the reply. "How far is it from home?" "Don't know." "Where are you now?" "Don't know." "Then you are lost, son." "No, I'm not, I'm with you." Anyone "with Christ" is not lost. He is safe forevermore, provided he not only has Christ but Christ has him.

A younger sister said to her sister: "I've got my Daddy." The father called the sister who said: "My Daddy's got me." This is safety and security and eternal life. "Jesus has me."

CHAPTER XI

CAN THOSE WHO HAVE FALLEN AWAY BE RECONVERTED?

Many who have once tasted the joy of knowing Christ have lost touch with Him and stumble in darkness, haunted by memories of happy days now faded, and enveloped with a deep discouragement. They have the feeling that this joy is gone forever—irretrievably lost.

Certain passages of scripture stick in their minds like a burn. These passages seem to preclude any return. The passages are usually these:

1. The unpardonable sin passage. “Truly, I say to you, all sins will be forgiven the sons of men, and whatever blasphemies they utter; but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin’—for they had said, ‘He has an unclean spirit.’” (Mark 3:28-30.) This unpardonable sin was the saying that the Spirit that was in Jesus was an unclean Spirit. The scribes had said, “He is possessed by Beelzebul, and by the prince of demons he casts out the demons” (vs. 22). Now Beelzebub was literally “the lord

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of filth." So they said that the Spirit that was in Jesus, the Holy Spirit, was "the lord of filth," or a filthy Spirit. This is the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit—saying that the Holy Spirit through which Jesus cast out demons was an abominable, filthy Spirit. This interpretation is borne out by the account, for they had said, "He has an unclean spirit."

Obviously this is a sin, seldom or never, committed by people today. Therefore it can be dismissed as a troubling point by any backslider or by a bewildered believer. A woman read one page of one of my books where this matter was dealt with and walked out of a mental institution and has never returned. She was well. A false conception had needlessly upset her.

2. This second passage upsets many:

For it is impossible to restore again to repentance those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the age to come, if they then commit apostasy, since they crucify the Son of God on their own account and hold him up to contempt. (Heb. 6:4-6.)

Another passage reads, "How much worse punishment do you think will be deserved by the man who has spurned the Son of God, and profaned the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and outraged the Spirit of grace?" (Heb. 10:29.)

Now these two passages revolve around the one word "apostasy." "Apostasy" does not refer to the ordinary backsliding of the person who was once saved. This is a specific type of going away from Christ. It is a deliberate and determined and decisive repudiation of Christ. It is a calling of good evil—a holding of Him up to "contempt." He has "spurned the Son of God," has "profaned" the blood of the covenant, and has "outraged" the Spirit of grace. This is no ordinary backsliding—it means deliberately trampling on what you held as sacred.

It is spiteful repudiation. Seldom does the ordinary backslider do that. He goes away, but he goes away sorrowful; he lives without Christ, but deep down he is homesick; he is eaten by pangs of remorse. His is not "apostasy"—it is a falling away.

3. A third passage is, "And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, in whom you were sealed for the day of redemption." (Eph. 4:30.) A kindred passage is, "Do not quench the Spirit." (I Thess. 5:19.) These passages refer to grieving and quenching the Spirit in ordinary acts of disobedience. They refer to refusal, not to repudiation.

Can then the ordinary backslider be restored to grace? The answer is that the outstanding apostle, Peter, was himself a backslider and a backslider of no ordinary type—he cursed and swore (thereby showing that the subconscious had not been converted) that he never knew Jesus. Did Jesus clamp down on him and say, "Your day of grace is over"? No, He looked on him with such tender compassion that Peter went out and wept bitterly. Jesus believed in Peter so much that He said: "When you are converted, strengthen your brethren." He believed in Peter so much even though He saw his impending collapse that He said that he would be converted again, and not only converted again, but would be able in spite of his fall to strengthen his brethren—his brethren who did not fall the way he fell. That was a very redemptive faith in Peter. When Jesus arose from the dead the angel said to the women: "Go tell his disciples and Peter"—tell Peter especially, a special word of love to a heartbroken man. Peter fulfilled the faith that Jesus had in him—he did strengthen his brethren and the world. An ex-backslider pushed humanity toward Christ with a stronger push than any man who ever lived, save one—Paul.

Hope for the backslider? There is special hope, for you can become strongest in the place where you are weakest. When a bone is broken, nature makes the broken place especially

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strong, that it might not be broken again—it is stronger than the unbroken places.

I personally owe much to a man who had been a backslider. He was a great evangelist of India, mightily used of God. Then he fell into adultery. He publicly confessed it and was restored. He was accepted again by the public. He was holding an evangelistic series when I knelt at the back of the church a physically broken man and arose a physically well man. A brass tablet on the wall of the church in Lucknow, India, has this inscription on it: "Near this spot Stanley Jones knelt a physically broken man and arose a physically well man." That happened in a series of meetings conducted by a man who had tripped and had fallen.

When you stumble, then stumble into the arms of God. When you fall, fall on your knees—and get back again, at once.

One of the most exquisitely beautiful passages of Scripture, used often to get the unsaved converted, was written not to the unconverted, but to a "fallen" church. "Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any one hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me." (Rev. 3:20.) This was spoken to the Laodicean church which was "neither cold nor hot." "So, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew you out of my mouth. For you say, I am rich, I have prospered, and I need nothing Those whom I love, I reprove and chasten; so be zealous and repent." And then follows the "Behold, I stand at the door and knock" passage. This lukewarm church made God sick! Today many rich, self-satisfied Christians who feel they have "need of nothing" make God sick! I have an advertisement for Christmas tree decorations advertising "Fireproof Icicles." I've seen a lot of "fireproof icicles" in pulpit and in the pew! On the gravestone of a man in New England was engraved, "He was a Christian without emotion." As if a Christian could be a Chris-

tian without emotion! In another graveyard in New England a long account of a church quarrel is engraved on a tombstone. They were not church members without emotion!

This church at Laodicea was lukewarm and their lukewarmness was expensive—to them and to us. Paul writes to the Colossians: “And when this letter has been read among you, have it read also in the church of the Laodiceans; and see that you read also the letter from Laodicea.” (Col. 4:16.) Paul wrote one of his matchless letters to the Laodicean church, a letter which would have enriched the world, as his other letters have done, but the Laodiceans were so lukewarm that they did not see the significance of the letter and let it be lost. They impoverished themselves and the world by their lukewarmness. Backsliding is expensive to the backslider—and everybody.

When one of the greatest men of our modern days, Mahatma Gandhi, was making up his mind as to whether he would accept the Christian faith he attended a Wesleyan Methodist church in South Africa. He tells in his autobiography how the people who attended the church seemed dull and listless and would sometimes nod and sleep during the sermon which in turn was dull and uninspiring. He found himself getting drowsy in that atmosphere and said that he felt compelled to give up going to that Methodist church. Shades of John Wesley! A Methodist church, which should have been in line of succession of the “warmed heart,” was lukewarm and noncontagious when one of the world’s greatest men was making up his mind about following Christ! That decision which Gandhi made in South Africa not to follow Christ affected the destiny of four hundred million people in India. Lukewarmness is expensive, devastatingly expensive.

Much of the lukewarmness is the kind the Ephesian church had:

I know your works, your toil and patient endurance, and how

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you cannot bear evil men but have tested those who call themselves apostles but are not, and found them to be false; I know you are enduring patiently and bearing up for my name's sake, and you have not grown weary. But I have this against you, that you have abandoned the love you had at first. Remember then from what you have fallen, repent and do the works you did at first. If not, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place, unless you repent. (Rev. 2:2-5.)

Here was a church that had everything—"works," "toil," "patient endurance," could "not bear evil men," "bearing up for my name's sake," "have not grown weary." Many a pastor would be satisfied and proud of such a church. But the church was a fallen church. It had everything except one thing—love. It was "fallen" in love. All their virtues were correct but cold. They were "faultily faultless, icily regular, and splendidly null."

The greatest area of falling away is a falling away in love. It can be so subtle, all the framework of Christianity remains—faith in God, belief in Christ, faithfulness in attendance at church, giving of our money, the moral code intact—all these, except one thing—love. When love dies life dies. The framework is a correct corpse, a corpse dressed up as the undertaker often dresses up a dead man with rouge and lipstick, but a corpse still. A Japanese pastor said in our Ashram "Overflowing Heart" meeting: "I had lost all habits of prayer and visitation, my church members had become unpleasant to me. When I was converted I was overflowing with the Holy Spirit. But I've lost it. I have tried to evade life. Now I hope to go through life not with clenched fists, but effortlessly. I've got back my first love."

Some people sat by the seaside and recounted their losses. One told of a ship that went down at sea—a ship that held all his possessions—a total loss. Another told of a grave on a foreign shore. When they had all spoken, the last one said: "All your

losses have been great, but mine has been the greatest—a believing heart has gone from me.” That was the greatest loss of all, but a more subtle loss can be that love has gone from the belief—leaving just a belief.

A professor said: “I didn’t give up my faith, I put it in a drawer, neglected it, and when I went to look for it, it was gone.”

That “believing heart” may be gone and yet leave many things intact. A pastor living in adultery said: “But I’ve never preached better in my life.” Yet—yet, he knew and I knew, that the better preaching was compensation to hide from himself and his parishioners the vital loss. We often build up those compensations. A medical missionary ran away with his secretary and left his wife and children. When I labored with him to return to God and his family he replied: “I’m called to organize another religion—less rigid, more liberal, more of the love of God.” It was a pathetic defense of the indefensible. Years later I visited him in the hospital, and he pathetically said: “I’m an old prodigal that never returned.” His defenses were gone and nothing but ruins remained. He did offer them to God, and he made his peace with God before he slipped away. His soul was saved, but his life was a loss, a total loss.

That leads us to ask, and to ask with bated breath, for so much hangs on the answer, Can those who are fallen be restored? The answer is in the word of Jesus to the lukewarm Laodicean church: “Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any one hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him and he with me.” Nothing more tenderly beautiful was ever uttered, and yet it was uttered to a lukewarm and fallen church. He is standing right now at your door and is knocking perhaps through this book. What are you to do? It’s simple—open the door! A door opens at the place where it was closed—you get back on where you got off. If you got off through neglect of prayer and the reading

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of the Word, then get back on by setting up the Quiet Time again. If you got off by forming a resentment against someone, then surrender that resentment to God and go to that person and make it right. If you have been dishonest, then confess the dishonesty and make restitution. If you have lost love and have substituted nagging, then surrender the nagging and give love. If you have let the making of money push out the love of God, then put money in its place—subordinate to the will of God—make a tithe the symbol of that subordination, and put God in His place, supreme, supreme over the nine-tenths. If you have been impure, then surrender the impurity and yourself to God. If you have been self-centered, then don't give up this, that, and the other thing—surrender that self to God. If you've been critical and faultfinding, then surrender that critical, faultfinding spirit to God and let Him substitute love and appreciation—to everybody.

Will He accept me as I am? Yes. Don't try to make yourself any better, to make yourself presentable—come just as you are. "I will come in to him"—to the fallen who "repent," and repentance is reversal. Repentance is not doing penance. Doing penance is an atonement for what you have done. That is an egocentric attempt at salvation. A big businessman said to me: "I have an awful sense of guilt in my life. I've tied my arm to the bedpost night after night so I couldn't sleep decently to punish myself, to atone for my sins." I asked: "Has that taken away the guilt?" "No," he replied, "it is still there." I replied: "You're on the wrong track, you are trying to offer your suffering, your blood as atonement for your sins. Don't try to offer your blood, but accept the blood of the Son of God. He died for you. It's a gift. Empty your hands of your attempts at self salvation. 'By grace you have been saved through faith and this is not your own doing, it is the gift of God.'" "Isn't that too cheap?" he asked. "No, not cheap. It is a very expensive gift, for if you take the gift you will belong forever

to the Giver. He will bind your heart with cords of love, but you wouldn't have it otherwise for worlds." We prayed, and he made the surrender of himself. A few days later I received this letter: "I didn't know a man could be as happy as I am. All that sense of guilt is gone. On Sunday I went to church and sang hymns I'd never sung before. I had sung the words, but now I really sang the hymns. And the next day I went to my work with a lightness of step I'd never known and for the first time in my life I let my full weight down on the universe." Salvation is a gift—"I will come in." Then fling open the door. The moment you do it He is in!

What will He do? "I will . . . eat with him"—will accept him as My host, will accept him with respect as a person; "and he with me"—will entertain him as My guest. Here is mutual respect—you're host and guest, and He is Guest and Host. You are restored to fellowship. The estrangement is gone. But remember the last thing is that He is Host—He is Lord!

A woman called me up and said without preliminaries: "I'm a lost person and I've run smack into God. I want to talk with you." That woman today is a very radiant person winning great numbers to Christ.

Can He restore us to fellowship and our lives to fruitfulness? Yes, He says: "I will restore to you the years which the swarming locust has eaten." (Joel 2:25.) And that happens. I mentioned the missionary doctor who said at the end that he was an old prodigal who never returned, and I remarked that his soul was saved but his life was lost. The young woman with whom he ran away saw that it was all wrong, asked me to help her to begin anew. I got her a job as a secretary, for she was a good one, telling the whole story to the employer. She put her children through school and college, became an honored and respected member of society, married a clergyman, and is winning others to Christ. The years that the locusts had eaten had been restored.

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A missionary, living in my home, confessed that he had fallen into sex sin. He faced the whole thing, broke an engagement he had with a missionary's daughter, resigned as a missionary, went back to America, began anew as a layman, and married and has been a very keen winner of others. The years that the locusts had eaten had been restored.

Remember the next verse after the "Behold, I stand at the door and knock" verse: "He who conquers, I will grant him to sit with me on my throne, as I myself conquered and sat down with my Father on his throne." (Rev. 3:21.) Here He promises to the lukewarm and fallen, not only a restoration to fellowship, but a sharing of His authority and power: "I will grant him to sit with me on my throne." He doesn't say to the penitent, "Now you stand up in the corner the balance of your days and do penance for what you've done." He forgives and He forgets and blots it all out of the book of His remembrance. Since He forgives and forgets so you can forgive yourself and accept yourself.

The African District Superintendent who led the revival in the Belgian Congo—the revival which swept through villages and tribes, leaving a trail of changed lives and changed communities—was a backslider. He had been really converted in 1932 in a revival and then fell away into criticism and resentments. He confessed it all and is leading one of the greatest confessional movements in the world today. Jesus shared His throne with him. He became a man of power. He was not only a good man, he was a man of authority and power.

The "Moody of Japan" was converted and then fell into a barren liberalism which knew everything and changed nothing. He came back from that arid liberalism to an evangelical faith and then became the "Moody of Japan." Jesus shared His throne with Him—he became a man of power.

If you asked me to name the woman who seemed in my experience across the years to embody strength and stability,

CAN THOSE WHO HAVE FALLEN AWAY BE RECONVERTED?

I would name a woman evangelist. She and her husband were evangelists, but she was the stronger and more effective of the two. Yet for years whenever there was a series of evangelistic meetings there was always one seeker—this woman. She was a perennial. It was almost a joke. One day she really “let go and let God” and became a woman of rocklike stability and power, and yet gentle and beautiful withal. The perennial seeker became a powerful helper of seekers. Jesus shared the throne with a weak woman made strong.

CHAPTER XII

THE CULTIVATION OF CONVERSION

Conversion is a gift and an achievement. It is the act of a moment and the work of a lifetime. You cannot attain salvation by disciplines—it is the gift of God. But you cannot retain it without disciplines. If you try to attain salvation by disciplines you will be trying to discipline an unsundered self. You will be sitting on a lid. The result will be tenseness instead of trust. “You will wrestle instead of nestle.” While salvation cannot be attained by discipline around an unsundered self, nevertheless when the self is surrendered to Christ and a new center formed, then you can discipline your life around that new center—Christ. Discipline is the fruit of conversion—not the root.

This passage gives the double-sidedness of conversion: “As therefore you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so live in him, rooted and built up in him and established in the faith.” (Col. 2:6-7.) Note, “received”—receptivity; “so live”—activity. It appears again, “rooted”—receptivity; “built up in Him”—activity. The “rooted” means we take from God as the roots

take from the soil; the "built up" means we build up as one builds a house, a character and life by disciplined effort. So we take and try; we obtain and attain. We trust as if the whole thing depended on God and work as if the whole thing depended on us. The alternate beats of the Christian heart are receptivity and response—receptivity from God and response in work from us. As Sam Shoemaker puts it: "the element of God working in and man working out."

The best Man that ever lived on our planet illustrated this receptivity and response rhythm. No one was so utterly dependent on God and no one was more personally disciplined in His habits. He did three things by habit: (1) "He stood up to read as his custom was"—He read the Word of God by habit. (2) "He went out into the mountain to pray as his custom was"—He prayed by habit. (3) "He taught them again as his custom was"—He passed on to others by habit what He had and what He had found. These simple habits were the foundation habits of His life. They are as up-to-date as tomorrow morning. No converted person can live without those habits at work vitally in his life.

First, the habit of reading the Word of God daily, preferably in the morning. The New Testament is the inspired record of the Revelation—the revelation is the person of Jesus Christ. He moves out of the pages of this Book and meets us with the impact of His Person on our persons. That impact is cleansing. "Now you are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you." When you "expose your all to His Everything," then you submit yourself to a daily cleansing of mind, of motive, of emotions. I know two brilliant Christians who come to the daily morning devotions without their Bibles. They can meditate, they say. They are both shallow. For they mediate God to themselves through their own thinking—they become the medium. They do not go to God direct as they imagine—they go through their own thinking; they become

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the mediator. That is why we have to have the revelation of God through the Word. It is God interpreting Himself to us. His interpretation of Himself is Jesus. When you expose your thinking to Him you expose yourself to God. These words of the New Testament have been in such close contact with the Word that they are vibrant with Life.

Dr. Howard Atwood Kelly, professor of gynecological surgery at Johns Hopkins, says of reading the Bible, "Such reading applied with an honest heart transforms the nature, enables the prostitute to love holiness and become an angel of mercy, and raises the beggar and the sot to set them among the princes of the earth." He said again: "The Bible vindicates itself because it is such excellent medicine. It has never failed to cure a single patient if only he took his prescription honestly."

Take the prescription of the Word of God daily. No Christian is sound who is not scriptural.

Second, pray in private by habit. When we read the Scripture God speaks to us. In prayer we speak to God. Then God speaks to us, no longer through the Word only, but directly in words to us.

Carlyle says: "Prayer is and remains the native and deepest impulse of the soul of man." Lincoln said: "I have been driven many times to my knees by the overwhelming conviction that I had nowhere else to go; my own conviction and that of those around me seemed insufficient for the day." Lincoln practiced prayer. A gentleman with an appointment to meet Lincoln at five A.M. arrived fifteen minutes early. He heard a voice in the next room and asked the attendant: "Who is in the next room? Someone with the President?" "No, he is reading the Bible and praying." "Is that his habit so early in the morning?" "Yes, sir, he spends each morning from four to five in reading the Scriptures and praying." No wonder we cannot forget Lincoln. He is perennially fresh with God.

There is no experience of conversion which will make you

immune against the lack of reading of the word of God and prayer. When prayer fades out, power fades out. We are as spiritual as we are prayerful, no more, no less.

Third, pass on to others what you have found. The third habit is the habit of passing on to others what has been given to us in the reading of the Word and prayer. It is a law of the mind that that which is not expressed dies. If you don't share it you won't have it. Paul says, "He who supplies seed to the sower" (II Cor. 9:10). He gives seed only to those who sow it. If you don't sow it, you will have nothing to sow. Those who do not pass on to others are themselves empty. The converted convert, or they don't stay converted. Unless you are evangelistic you don't remain evangelical.

These three things are basic in the cultivation of the converted life. Without them the converted life will fade out. In addition to them certain auxiliary suggestions must be made.

1. Cultivate the new life by daily disciplines. Commissioner Brengle of the Salvation Army, a center of great spiritual power, suggests three things to keep the fire burning: "Keep the draught open; clean the ashes out; keep putting on fuel."

2. Keep honest at any cost. A South African boy had won a swimming championship, but he was six months over age when he won it. Then he was converted. He brought his beloved trophy in his hands and made a clean breast of it before the committee.

3. Keep confessing your sins after conversion. Don't be afraid to say: "I am sorry. I was wrong." The rule about confessing your sins should be, the circle of confession should be the circle affected by the sin. If the sin has been against an individual confess it to that individual; if against a family, to a family; if against a group, then to the group; if against a church, to the church.

4. Pray for those who have wronged you. That will be an antidote for resentments and bitterness. A theological pro-

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fessor keeps a card index of nasty letters he receives and prays for their writers every day. No wonder his spirit has an extraordinary sweetness. A friend of mine was shot at by a youth, who because of it was sent to prison for twelve years. My friend kept in touch with him through those prison years and now that his term of sentence is over he has taken him into his home.

5. Constantly enlarge the area of your conversion. Make your conversion take in more and more areas of your life. In the Sat Tal Ashram in India we gave the servants, including the sweeper, a holiday one day each week, and we volunteered to do their jobs for them. The sweeper's work included the cleaning of the latrines before the days of flush toilets. No one would touch that job but an outcaste, but we volunteered. One day I said to a Brahmin convert who was hesitating to volunteer: "Brother C., when are you going to volunteer?" He shook his head slowly and said: "Brother Stanley, I'm converted, but I'm not converted that far." Some of our conversions are "Conversions, Limited," and some are "Conversions, Unlimited." Some take in the individual life, but not the social and economic. Some let their conversion function within their class and race, but not among all classes and all races.

A little girl was kneeling on her father's lap and was telling him how much she loved him, but she was looking over her father's shoulder and making faces at her little brother. The mother saw it and said: "You little hypocrite, you telling your father you love him and then making faces and sticking out your tongue at your little brother." Christians who hold race prejudices do just that. They tell God the Father they love Him and then look over His shoulder and tell His other children they despise them. How can we love God whom we have not seen unless we love His children whom we do see?

Enlarge the area of your conversion, taking in fresh territory every day.

6. Give up habits that cannot be Christianized. In Africa a

Christian teacher used to go off on week ends and drink. He became drunk, and, riding on a bicycle, began to get dizzy and went into a native hut and slept. When he woke up an old man was seated looking at him. The old man asked him who he was, and was told that he was a Christian. When he asked the old man who he was, he replied, "I'm not a Christian, but if I were I wouldn't be living the way you are—I'd really live a Christian." This awakened the teacher; he was really converted and lived a Christian life afterwards—converted by an unconverted man!

Why should a child of God cut his life expectancy in half by deliberately taking poison into his system in smoking? This is the finding of those who have investigated. Why try to prove yourself an exception? And if you are a woman why hasten the process of decay by smoking?

7. After partaking of the divine nature add these things:

His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness . . . and become partakers of the divine nature. For this very reason make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love. (II Pet. 1:3-7.)

Sit down every day and go over these seven things and ask yourself if you are adding them to your basic faith—virtue, knowledge, self-control, steadfastness, godliness, brotherly affection, and love. Check up to see whether you are going up or down in each of these qualities—especially the last one. All growth in Christian living is a growth in love. You may add the other six to your faith, but if you don't add love then you are going down as a Christian.

8. Fix the habit of tithing your income. I gave a copy of a decision card to the local committee to be used in an evangelistic

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campaign. I put on it one item: "I will give a tithe of my income," but the card came out, "I will give a little of my income." We thus tone down our giving from "a tithe" to "a little." We become "little" with our "little" giving. The tithe belongs to the Lord. We only give as we give out of the nine-tenths.

9. Don't wait for the big tasks, do the little ones in a big way. "You have been faithful over a little, I will set you over much." A little man, looking at a huge man, said: "If I was as big as you, you know what I would do? I'd go out in the woods, and I'd take a big bear and tear him limb from limb." The big man looked at him for a moment and then said: "Little man, there are lots of little bears out there." If you can't do great things, then give yourself greatly to little things.

10. Make it a habit to repeat every night before you drop off to sleep the words: "In Him who strengthens me I am able for anything." Say it as you open your eyes in the morning and keep saying it during the day. A little fellow who had tried it said: "It works." He passed from a nay-saying person, to a yea-saying person, from the negative to the positive. Another little fellow of seven listened to his mother saying: "Oh, I'm so dumb." He put in with this: "Mother, don't say you are dumb, or you will be dumb." He had the right idea.

Two women were treated by a doctor and both of them thought he had given them a sedative. They were so sleepy they couldn't keep their eyes open. What he gave them was a stimulant! One of them said to the doctor: "Please tell us what medicine you are going to give so we'll know how to react."

Your thoughts determine you, so you determine your thoughts. Say to yourself: "I can do anything I ought to do," and you will do it!

11. Live in a state of relaxed receptivity. Know how to take and you'll know how to give. This age has insisted on relaxation so much that this insistence has become in many cases, "Relax

as hard as you can." Don't try to relax—just relax. Don't relax in a vacuum—relax in His presence. Receive from Him. When He has all of you, then you have all of Him.

12. Form the habit of speaking to somebody every day about Christ. Nothing is yours until you share it. A man was introduced to a community by a man who became his sponsor. He was introduced to the Rotary, to the civic organizations, and then finally he found his sponsor standing beside him when he joined the church. The thing that surprised him was that his sponsor had introduced him to every phase of community life, but had not said a word about the church or Christ. So he was surprised to find him as his sponsor there. A guilty silence suppressed the most important thing in the life of both.

On the other hand, a businessman said to me:

No one ever served the devil more than I—drink, women, gambling, swearing. Then I began through sheer disgust to lop off these sins. Eighteen years ago I stopped drinking. Then I let women go; then gambling, and then swearing. I was master of my fate—I'd done this with will power. But I began to be bad-tempered and jumpy. I did everything in a hurry, made snap judgments, was irascible and unhappy. Something was pressing within me. It was God. One day I went into a ravine and knelt and said, "O God, from this day I surrender myself." Peace came. Now I began to be calm within. I don't think I would hurry now if my shirttail were afire. I began to be assured. This last year I made 155 calls in visitation evangelism. I sent for a man who had worked for me and asked his forgiveness. Everybody saw now I had passed from reformation to transformation.

The real sign of his transformation was that he began to help others to transformation. When it was just reformation it was noncontagious. When it became transformation contagion set in. The authentic sign of a new life is the desire, the determination, and the decision to share it.

CHAPTER XIII

HOW TO HELP OTHERS INTO CONVERSION

We have looked at the question of how? But that was for ourselves—how do we find conversion? The next question after finding is, how do we help others to find conversion? For the end of evangelism is to produce an evangelist. You haven't really got a person "in" until you get him "out"—helping others to conversion.

In the Hollywood Presbyterian Church, one of the great churches in America, in the hall for Youth is this motto up at the front, "To know Him; to help others to know Him." These are the alternate beats of the Christian heart—to know Him, to help others to know Him. You cannot continue to know Him unless you are helping others to know Him.

These attitudes are necessary if you are to help others to know Him:

1. *Any one who really desires to win others to conversion can do so. When I say "anyone" I mean "anyone." Only those who debar themselves are debarred. The fact is that the great forward*

movement in evangelism of the future will be lay evangelism. Dean Inge says:

A rebirth of spiritual religion . . . as in former revivals will be independent of the church and not too kindly regarded by ecclesiastics. Christianity began as a lay prophetic religion. There was not a single priest among the apostles. . . . It is on the laity the future of Christianity depends though we must have an organization to prevent the fruits of the Spirit being lost.

Canon Peter Green says: "The great weakness of the Church of England has been that she has never made full use of lay people. Until you get a man down on his knees and up on his feet to speak, you have got nowhere in using him." Canon Bryan Green says: "The future of Christianity and the evangelization of the world rests in the hands of ordinary men and women and not primarily in those of professional Christian ministers." ¹

These comments came from England. In America evangelism is moving from the margin to the center of the life of the churches, and this includes the ministers. Evangelism is coming into its own—especially lay evangelism. A businessman of St. Louis has set aside one day a week to call on people to win them to Christ. He and his wife won 120 the first year. Any age can win others—a little girl of ten years of age won eighteen other children. A youth of seventeen said to a lawyer of eighty: "Which team of evangelism do you belong to?" The lawyer replied: "Why, I don't belong to a church." The boy replied: "Why don't you do it now? You haven't got much time to do it in." This got him. The next Sunday the lawyer marched down the aisle with the lad and gave himself to Christ and the church—eighty and seventeen!

The first thing then to fix in your mind is: "Anyone can do it! Then I will do it!"

¹ Green, *op. cit.*, p. 246.

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2. *Everyone is made for conversion.* In the very structure of his being he is made for conversion and needs it—and deep down wants it—for his own fulfillment. Every person feels a sense of incompleteness, of frustration, of missing his life-mark, until conversion comes. When it comes it has a sense of home-coming upon it. A little girl away from home for the first time in a camp was seen at bedtime with tears upon her cheeks, and the camp counselor said, “Are you homesick?” “No,” replied the little girl, “I’m not homesick, I’m heresick.” Deep down every person whether he realizes it or not is “heresick,”—a nostalgia for God, the homeland of his soul. This is not something imposed on the soul—it is ingrained in the very structure. The watermark in paper is not stamped on it—it is a part of its very structure. So we are made by Christ, for Christ, and when we find Him we find ourselves. “All things were created through him [Christ] and for him.” (Col. 1:16.) The touch of Christ is upon all creation and everything is made in its inner structure to work in His way, and when it does, it works rhythmically, harmoniously, at its best. When it works some other way it works its own ruin. We are incurably Christ-bent. We want Him even when we think we want something else.

When you go to a person to win him to conversion, remember you have an ally in his heart who will take your side. It’s two against one—always.

3. *It’s three against one, really.* The Holy Spirit is dealing with every person alive. Through conscience, through the pressure of higher ideals, through the impact of better people upon us, and directly, the Holy Spirit is at work. He was there before you. “He shall convict the world of sin”—shall convict concerning what we have not been and done; “and of judgment to come”—shall convict of God’s last word—judgment. The Holy Spirit is your faithful ally. It’s three against one—you, the Holy Spirit and the innate longings of the man! Its a pushover,

except in the most hardened cases, and even they are often brittle—easily broken.

4. *Then go to the person with a positive expectation of winning the person.* Don't go with any apologies, any hesitations, any tentativeness—be affirmative without being rude. I went into a store and asked for a certain type of collar, and I asked in these words: "You haven't a certain type of collar, have you?" The clerk replied: "Why so negative? Yes, I have it." Francis of Assisi used to sympathize with the thieves and robbers saying he was sorry for them, for they couldn't give expression to the holiness within them. Did they respond!

5. *Don't be inhibited by a feeling of your own unworthiness.* Of course you are unworthy, who isn't? You are not asking people to follow you, but to follow Christ. We are imperfect witnesses to a perfect Savior. As C. T. Niles says: "Evangelism is just one beggar telling another beggar where to find bread." You are not the issue—He is! You don't have to be a saint to do this work, but you do have to be sincere. I attempted personal work when I was a church member without conversion and was met by the reply: "You are only religious during revivals." It was true. I did not attempt it again until I was converted. Then the first person I spoke to was converted—my grandmother, at eighty-two years of age, my first convert. She wanted what I had found. The beggar is a beggar still, but he must be able to tell where he found bread.

6. *Don't be surprised if there seems to be an initial resistance.* But you must have an ultimate faith that you will win the person. We don't easily open our lives to others. There is a tendency to close up. The fact is that there are two instincts within us. One is to close up against any intruder, and the other is to disclose ourselves if we can find someone sympathetic and understanding. If you run into a manifestation of the operation of the first instinct, don't give up and say that the person is impossible. Stay around until the second instinct

begins to operate. For deep down people want nothing so much as to tell some sympathetic person their inmost longings and needs.

7. When they reveal their needs, *don't be misled by a marginal need*—the need to straighten out this, that, or the other. The real need is conversion. Often the person will try to put you off with reformation instead of going on to transformation. A friend was counseling a woman who had certain “problems.” When she started to tell her about her problems, the friend gently stopped her and said: “Before we go into the problems, may I ask, have you surrendered yourself to Christ?” The woman replied: “No, I don't think I have.” “Then,” said the friend, “let's settle that first.” They went to their knees and the woman arose a changed and happy person. “Now,” said the friend, “Tell me about your problems.” The woman laughed: “I haven't got any. That was it.” The friend telling about it afterwards said, “I've found out how to save time in dealing with people—get them converted first and then deal with their problems. When you do this their problems have usually vanished.”

8. That leads to the next step. *Aim at the surrender of the self, not the surrender of this thing, that thing, the other thing.* We may surrender these things in lieu of surrendering the self. The real crux is the surrender of the self. Until that is done, nothing is done. Usually the person is glad, deep down, to get himself off his own hands, for the self on our own hands is a problem and a pain. In the hands of God it is a possibility and a power.

9. *In lieu of surrendering the self the person may raise this, that, or the other religious question.* He may try to get you into a discussion about points of religion and this doctrine or that doctrine. Don't bite at that bait, for you'll get hooked on marginal issues. The end in view is not discussion, but decision. The only real decision is a decision to surrender the self.

10. *When you come to the point of decision get the person*

on his or her knees. Getting on the knees signifies the fact that the issue is not now between the counselor and the counselee, but between the counselee and God.

When you get to your knees suggest that you will pray first, and then the seeker will pray. In your prayer you can pave the way to surrender and faith by telling God that you are grateful it is going to be done. Then ask the seeker to pray. If the seeker will pray out loud well and good, but if he or she hesitates and says, "I don't know how to pray," then suggest that the person pray a prayer after you sentence by sentence. And you pray the prayer in the first person, as if the person were praying: "Dear Lord, I come to Thee just as I am." Then after you have prayed that prayer of repentance and self-surrender and faith, ending on the note of believing that acceptance has taken place, then you pray a prayer on your own thanking God that the great transaction has been done, that he or she belongs.

When you arise from your knees take the hand of the person in congratulation repeating a verse like this: "What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them and you shall have them." (Mark 11:24, K.J.V.) Call attention to "receive," not "will receive."

Then urge upon the seeker—don't look in, you'll be discouraged; don't look around, you'll be distracted; don't look back, you'll be paralyzed; look at Jesus, and you'll have peace and assurance.

Tell him that feeling is a by-product of surrender and faith and obedience, very like the foaming waves thrown up by the ship as it goes forward. The point is to go forward with Him, the feeling will take care of itself.

11. Have him write his decision on the flyleaf of his Bible. "On this — day of ——— I turned from my old way of life; I surrendered myself to Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior; I am His forever; and by word and by life, I will witness for Him to others." Then ask him to sign it.

That last is important. "I will witness for Him to others." The Book of Revelation says: "They overcame . . . by the blood of the Lamb, and the word of their testimony"—by two things, by what He did for them—"the blood of the Lamb," His self-giving; by what they did for Him—"the word of their testimony"—their response to that self-giving. They could not help but tell it.

12. *Get the convert to straighten up his life in all his relationships.* Impress on him the necessity of saying: "I am sorry." It is a catharsis. A pastor in Japan was in trouble in his home. His wife and his father were at loggerheads. She decided she was going to her own home. The husband said: "I can't tell you to go or not to go, but I'm going to fast and pray to see what God's answer is—what guidance He will give me." She put on her best clothes and then put them back into the drawer. At the end of the day she said: "Eat, you are not responsible—it's between me and my father-in-law." The pastor called together the family and announced: "God spoke to me and said: 'You're the head of this home and you're responsible for what has happened. You are the key one.' So I repent. It's all my fault." The wife spoke up: "No, it's my fault. I never loved my father and I've transferred this hate to my father-in-law." The brother spoke up: "No, I'm to blame. I asked my brother for something and he refused. So I went to my father and he did it over the head of my brother. And my sister-in-law knew this and it further divided the two." The maid spoke up: "No, I'm to blame. I wanted to be loved by the father and the wife. So I would go to the father and carry tales about the wife and then go to the wife and carry tales about the father, to gain the favor of both. The father spoke: 'No, it's my fault. I said to myself: 'I'm the oldest and therefore the family belongs to me and they should serve and obey me.' But I saw this morning: 'The greatest among you shall be the servant of all.' I'm going

to be the servant of all from this time." The whole thing was settled. Don't be afraid to say "I am sorry."

13. *Get them into the Christian church as a vital, contagious member.* If they are already in, emphasize that they now become "vital and contagious." If they are not in, then get them in. For the church is the natural home of the converted. It is true that often getting a convert to go into some churches is "like putting a live chick under a dead hen." One pastor announced from the pulpit that the church should honor the church mouse, for she had brought four into the church, and that was more than the rest of the membership had done. But for the most part this isn't true. The Christian church with all its faults is the greatest serving institution on earth. It has many critics, but no rivals in the work of human redemption. There isn't a spot on earth, from the frozen North to the tropical islands of the sea, where we haven't gone with schools, hospitals, leper and orphan asylums, churches, the Gospel—everything to lift the soul, the mind, the body—the total life of the human race. No other institution has done anything like it—none whatever. The fact that the church has been able to survive the dead weight of a large proportion of its membership unconverted is a proof of its essential soundness and vitality. A minority of converted people keep its soul alive. We must increase that minority to a majority.

When a man said to Moody that he could live a Christian life apart from the church, Moody simply replied by pulling a live coal from the rest of the burning coals in the grate and letting it lie on the hearth separate. It died. The man said, "I see your point." The Christian life cannot be lived apart from the Christian church. So get your convert into the church as a part of a living fellowship.

14. *Remember that in this whole process from the initial approach to the final consummation in getting the person into the church and out on his own to win others, the Holy Spirit is*

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teaching you what you shall say and do at every point of need. A verse was given me in the beginning of my missionary work among the intellectuals of India and it has become a life verse: "When they deliver you up, do not be anxious how you are to speak or what you are to say; for what you are to say will be given to you in that hour; for it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you." (Matt. 10:19-20.) It has literally been fulfilled. It will be fulfilled in you. Let your full weight down on it.

A friend has had little or no experience in dealing with a person of another faith and yet she was Spirit-guided in dealing with a sophisticated Jewish woman. The woman told of finding that her husband was living a double life. She was furious with him; she wanted to leave him and have her revenge—to break him. The friend wisely guided the woman to her own problems of resentment and hate. Then she asked her to pray to her own Jehovah. "But He is far off and impersonal," the woman replied. Then the friend told of Jesus who put a face on God and was very near and lovable. "But," she said, "I don't want to take away your faith and impose mine. You go and ask God if He has any objection to your accepting Christ." The woman promised. The next morning the woman bounded up the stairs and burst into her room and said: "I did. And God said He had no objection to my accepting His Son. I'm so happy. I've found my Savior. And I'm not going to leave my husband and try to break him. I'm going to love him and try to make him."

It was given this friend in that hour what she should say. It was the perfect method of dealing with a person of another faith. You will become skillful with His skill, loving with His love, and wise with His wisdom.

CHAPTER XIV

THE HOLY SPIRIT IN CONVERSION

When we emphasize conversion, as we have done in this book, it sounds as though it were the work of man. Conversion is made up of “con”—with, and “vertare”—to turn—to turn with. The emphasis seems to be upon man’s turning. That is important. “The choice is always ours.” But the word “with” is also important—it is not “to turn,” but “to turn *with*.” The “with” introduces us to the Holy Spirit. The element of the Holy Spirit in conversion makes the conversion really a new birth. It is not enough to turn around, you have to be turned inside out—to be reborn in the very structure of your make-up.

This happens physically in babies when they have Rh incompatibility. There is a blood exchange. There is an exchange of half an ounce of blood taken out and half an ounce of blood taken in until the old is totally removed, replaced by the new compatible blood.

That takes place spiritually. We have a blood transfusion from the Son of God. We actually become partakers of the divine nature, “by which he has granted to us his precious

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and very great promises, that through these you may escape the corruption that is in the world because of passion, and become partakers of the divine nature." (II Pet. 1:4.) We do not become God, but we do partake of His "nature." The incompatible spiritual Rh, introduced into human nature as "corruption that is in the world because of passion," is replaced by the compatible "divine nature." This exchange of blood in which our corrupted sinful blood which has come in "through passion" is exchanged for the pure blood of the Son of God, is usually accomplished through two great blood transfusions—the new birth of the Spirit and the baptism of the Spirit. One introduces you to the new life and the other introduces the new life into you—introduces it into every portion of your being. You are then filled with the Spirit.

Just how deeply does this introduction of the "divine nature" extend? That it goes into the conscious mind, we know. Does it extend to the subconscious mind? Can we have a new subconscious mind? The most important question for theology is, Can the subconscious be redeemed? For psychology tells us that we are largely determined from the subconscious. Dr. Arnold A. Hutschnecker puts it this way: "He [Freud] has shown how reason often follows meekly after, hurrying up with explanations and justifications—rationalizations, we have come to call them—of acts and opinions determined upon in the subconscious sphere." ¹ Dr. Menninger further states: "Many a sufferer from emotional conflict will willingly, even eagerly, place himself on the altar of the operating table and sacrifice a part of his body to the terrible feelings of guilt which unconsciously dominate him." The director of the Woman's Hospital of the University of Tübingen says: "Their illness is a psychic conflict sailing under a gynecological flag." That conflict is largely in the subconscious. Dr. Hutschnecker further states:

¹ *The Will to Live*. © 1958 by Prentice-Hall, Inc.

"Whether the complaint is fatigue, insomnia, indigestion, colitis, constipation, or diarrhea, or allergy of one sort or another, anxiety generally lies behind it." ² The seat of that anxiety is in the subconscious. This anxiety in the subconscious produces a tension in the whole person.

In prolonged stress the body is maintained in a constant state of mobilization. Reserves of energy are constantly being poured out, tensions are mercilessly sustained, and organs like the heart and those involved in complex chemical processes are driven to their utmost capacity without pause. In prolonged stress we are racing a high-powered motor at top speed—in neutral. We are burning up fuel. We are wearing out parts. But we are not going anywhere. This is the destructive effect of prolonged stress.³

The seat of this "stress" is a disturbed subconscious.

Into the conscious mind is introduced by conversion a new sense of conscious cleanness, a new loyalty, a new love. This introduction is so real, so satisfying, so conduct-determining, that the converted think the battle is over, that life is now to be one glad song of victory. Those honeymoon days come to an end, usually within a year. The subconscious urges, which have been lying low, apparently stunned into insensibility by the introduction of this new and different and authoritative life in the conscious mind, now begin to reassert themselves. Tempers, moods, fears, resentments, which we thought were gone forever, now lift their heads from the storm cellars of the subconscious, and the struggle between the conscious and the subconscious ensues. Paul calls it the war between "spirit" and "flesh." Goethe puts it:

Two souls, alas! are lodged
Within my breast,

² *Ibid.*, p. 67.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 181.

Which struggle there
For undivided reign.

Many take it for granted that this stalemate is the best that the Christian faith offers. So they settle down to the state of being canceled out by this inevitable conflict. The seventh chapter of Romans is their escape and their excuse—Paul had this conflict, why shouldn't we? If the seventh of Romans were the only gospel Paul had to preach we would never have heard of him again. But the seventh of Romans is pre-Christian and sub-Christian—a man under the law fighting with sin in the subconscious with no resources of Christ at his disposal. It depicts the whole world experience without Christ. Does the Christian faith provide a way out of this dilemma? It can only if it provides for the conversion of the subconscious, and it does provide for just that. The area of the work of the Holy Spirit is largely, if not entirely, in the subconscious. He who made the subconscious has made plans for its redemption, its conversion, its sanctification. What kind of Creator would He have been if He had created the subconscious and then had not provided for its redemption in case evil should invade it? Evil has invaded it. It has taken over the self urge and turned it into selfishness; the sex urge and has turned it into sexuality; the herd urge and turned it into subservience to the herd—making one a herd-dominated person. All this with our consent—racial and personal consent. A Trojan horse has been introduced into the subconscious and in moments of crisis its hidden inmates spring out and take over the actions and the reactions. A civil war ensues between the converted conscious and the unconverted subconscious minds. A woman puts it this way: "I'm the worst personality in the world. I kick people on the shins, and I kick them first." Obviously with her conscious mind she loathed being "the worst personality in the

world" and yet in her subconscious mind she was what she loathed.

A little girl of four in a missionary home always got up from the table and went into the other room while her elder sister read passages from the Bible. Why? She always wanted to do what her bigger sister did, and when she couldn't read as her sister did, she retreated out of the situation—she escaped. Often the will to retreat, the will to escape, the will to fail, resides in the subconscious mind, and we run away instead of facing up to unpleasant situations. Unless the subconscious can be cleansed and converted and consecrated to new ends the person with an unconverted subconscious is almost bound to be a half-person with a half-output.

It is, therefore, good news to know that the Holy Spirit's work is designed to convert the subconscious and designed especially to convert it. "The Spirit of Truth is with you and shall be in you." He passes from the "with" to the "in." He cannot redeem us from the outside. This must be an "inside job"—it must be from the within. No uttering of exhortations or repeating of pious advice from the outside can touch these inner depths. Some dynamic, redemptive Force must move within and take over these urges, with our consent, and cleanse and control them. That redemptive Force is the Holy Spirit.

Before Pentecost the Holy Spirit was "with" the disciples but not "in" them. Hence we see arising to the surface signs of the unconverted subconscious: (1) Selfish egoism—they quarreled over first places. (2) Self-righteousness—"Though they all fall away because of you, I will never fall away." (3) Resentments—"Shall we bid fire to come down from heaven and consume them?" (4) Spiritual impotence—"Why could we not cast it out?" (5) Criticism—"Why this waste?" (6) Group bigotry—"We forbade them for they followed not us." (7) Race prejudice—"Send her [a Syro-Phoenician] away for she crieth after us." (8) Selfish acquisitiveness—"We have left all . . . what do we

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get?" (9) A dislike of self-sacrifice—"Be it far from thee . . . This shall never be." (10) Fear—"Behind closed doors for fear."

Just as bubbles arise to the surface from the mud of a lake, showing there is decay there, so these ten bubbles arose from the subconscious of the disciples and showed that the subconscious had not yet been redeemed—there was decay still at work in the depths. All these things disappeared when the Holy Spirit moved in and took over.

The same things manifested themselves among the early Christians. They were Christians with the conscious mind converted, but Paul could say: "That perhaps there may be quarreling, jealousy, anger, selfishness, slander, gossip, conceit, and disorder." (II Cor. 12:20.) Amid the seven things, at the very center was "selfishness"—an unsundered self. That is always at the center of an unconverted subconscious. The unsundered self was the root and "disorder" was the fruit. One was cause and the other effect.

We rationalize these wrong attitudes and acts, but at bottom they are the same—manifestations of an unconverted subconscious. A little girl said, "Mother, when it's me it's temper, but when it's you it's nerves." In both cases it was the unconverted subconscious. A pastor put it: "People who live for themselves are constantly getting their feelings hurt." This touchiness is the outcropping of an unconverted subconscious.

When the Holy Spirit moved in and took over the inner life of the disciples every single one of the ten unsavory outcroppings of the unconverted subconscious disappeared. Instead of selfish egoism there was self-surrender; self-righteousness was replaced by a deep humility based on grace; resentments were dissolved by love; spiritual impotence was turned into spiritual adequacy; criticism gave way to appreciation; group bigotry became group co-operation; race prejudice was changed into human brotherhood; selfish acquisitiveness was transmuted into the most amaz-

ing burst of charity the world has ever seen; a dislike of self-sacrifice became self-sacrifice that has never been matched; fear turned into a courage that laughed its way through persecution and death.

All this was done effortlessly, for the disciples weren't doing it—they were allowing the Holy Spirit within them to do it. That sounds trite, but it is the most important difference in the world of human motive and dynamic for conduct. For this cuts right down to the subconscious basis of our living—down to where we can do things or not do them. If the Holy Spirit can take over the subconscious, with our consent and co-operation, then we have almighty Power working at the basis of our lives, then we can do anything we ought to do, go anywhere we ought to go, and be anything we ought to be. Life is supplied with a basic adequacy.

Without that basic adequacy we fumble this business of living. There is what is known as "house power"—is your house supplied with enough power to run all the things you need to use for adequate living? If not, then you are constantly blowing fuses when too heavy a load is laid upon the "house power." That happens in our personal lives. When too heavy demands are laid on our "personal power" we blow fuses—"blow our tops," we put it. It is a sign of frustration, of inadequacy to face the demands of living. We are not bad—we are just inadequate. There is nothing in the subconscious except our basic drives, controlled only by the conscious mind's suppressing them. This means that there is a basic tension between conscious and subconscious—we are basically at tension. Paul puts it this way: "For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh; for these are opposed to each other, to prevent you from doing what you would." (Gal. 5:17.) The Spirit is in control of the conscious mind, but the flesh, the elemental desires, are in control of the subconscious and there is a basic conflict and

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consequent tension, with the result that you are prevented "from doing what you would."

With the surrender of the subconscious to the Holy Spirit—surrendering "all we know," the conscious, and "all we don't know," the subconscious, He moves into the subconscious and takes over control of these basic driving urges. The self urge He cleanses from selfishness and dedicates the self to the kingdom of God; the sex urge He cleanses from sexuality and dedicates this creative urge to creating new movements, new hopes, newborn souls, new life. The herd urge He cleanses from subservience to the "world" and fastens it upon the kingdom of God—the highest and ultimate social allegiance. These urges are not wiped out, for they cannot be wiped out—they are a part of us. They can only be dedicated to higher ends.

Now the conscious and the subconscious minds are under a single control and redemption—the Holy Spirit. You become a unified personality.

A further bit of good news is that the Holy Spirit not only initially consecrates these urges, He keeps them consecrated. He is the Spirit of consecration, "who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God." (Heb. 9:14.) The eternal Spirit was the power behind the offering of Christ upon the cross. He eternally keeps our powers and drives consecrated as long as we consent. We do not have to stand nervously and tensely beside the altar of consecration to keep our powers and urges "upon the altar." The Holy Spirit does the consecrating. That lets down an anxious tension within. You let go and you let God—the Holy Spirit—take over control at the central depths of your being, the subconscious. Now you can let your full weight down. You can really relax.

Now your dreams, which are the outcroppings of the subconscious, become Christian dreams. Pagan psychiatry has no notion of the control of the subconscious by the Holy Spirit and

hence no notion of a Christian dream. So when a fully surrendered Christian dreamed that someone had done the worst possible thing to him, and he grabbed the man by the throat with both hands and said: "I could choke you to death, but I forgive you," a pagan psychiatrist put a fantastically pagan interpretation to the dream, instead of seeing it as a truly Christian dream with a truly Christian reaction to evil—forgiveness of injuries.

That leads me to say that when the Holy Spirit controls the subconscious our reactions then become Christian. The conscious mind determines the actions, our subconscious mind determines the reactions. And reactions are just as important as the actions. Many Christians are Christian in their actions—they don't lie, steal, commit adultery, or get drunk, but they react badly to what happens to them—they react in anger, bad temper, self-pity, jealousy, and envy. If wrong actions leave the person devastated—and they do—then wrong reactions leave the person just as devastated. A case for wrong reactions can be made, "Look what they did to me." "Look what happened to me." Whether the wrong reaction has a case or not, the results are the same—a devastated personality. When the depths are held by the Holy Spirit then the reaction is Christian.

In one of my books I told the story of a woman's reaction to the death of her husband. She went through it without a tear. This wasn't a chance reaction, a moral aberration, it has become a settled attitude. She tells of the same victory in the death of her father, "My father had lung cancer. I arrived at 1 P.M. and he died at 7:15 P.M. I was grateful I could get there in time, for my stepmother really needed me. The room was filled with people, we knew he was just about gone, and I knew there was no minister present, so I prayed myself. I put my arms around my stepmother and thanked Jesus aloud for his life and his

new life in glory. I said we surrendered his life into Jesus' hands and that he finally made the Promised Land! I prayed that Jesus would comfort and help Mother to learn to live without Daddy's physical presence in her life and that everyone in the room would love Jesus more than life itself, for He is Life. It seemed to help everyone for me to pray. I was so happy that Daddy was saved and that I knew he really made it over the Great Divide. I felt like shouting, 'Hallelujah . . . Jesus is Lord!' But for their sakes, I just let my face shine out the victory my soul could scarcely contain for Joy!" Here the reaction to the death of her husband and to the death of her father was the same—Joy! That could not have come save from a converted subconscious. The account says of Jesus, "In that same hour he [Jesus] rejoiced in the Holy Spirit." When you cannot rejoice in your circumstances, in the things that happen around you and to you, you can always rejoice in the Holy Spirit. He abides in the depth of the subconscious and is always a well-spring of joy. "He shall abide with you for ever"—the one Constant amid a world of flux and change.

The Holy Spirit then does three things, He cleanses and coordinates and consecrates the subconscious drives and brings harmony within. He helps us to react to the things that happen to us—helps us to react in a Christian way.

The sum total of that means that there is now power in our lives. We are not now pushed around by circumstances—a push-over for temptation and evil. We know where we want to go, and we have power to move on to that goal. We have moved out of the seventh chapter of Romans into the eighth. "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath set me free from the law of sin and death." This higher law of "the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus" has cancelled the lower law of sin and death. Just as a bird flying takes advantage of the law of the elasticity of air and thereby rises above the law of gravitation, so we live by

this higher law which overcomes the law of sin and death. I quoted Freud as saying: "Dark, unfeeling, and unloving powers determine human destiny." He discovered the subconscious and fell into its fatalisms. Christ made the subconscious ("All things were made by him") and provided for its remaking—provided that nothing less than the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Creation, and the Spirit of Re-creation—should dwell within us and remake us, not by commands and exhortations, but by companionship and experience. It works, for He works it—from within.

Dr. Henrietta Mears has been used mightily in helping young people into a new life. She tells us the secret. She was a Christian but felt she needed power. She said to God: "Lord, I've given up everything for you and I cling to no one else. I want my whole body to be presented as a living sacrifice to you, filled to the fullest with the power of the Holy Spirit." Then into the quiet of her heart came the verse: "How much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him?" Right then and there she knew the matter was settled. She said: "Thank you, Lord. I accept by faith the filling and power of the Holy Spirit, just as I accepted Christ as my Savior." The Holy Spirit moved into the depths of her—into the subconscious.

I sat in a narrow gorge in the high Sierra Mountains in the early morning. As the day began to break the sunlight was upon the tops of the mountains, but the gorge beneath me was in mists and deep shadows. Then as full day came the sunlight came down the hillsides and flooded the depths of the gorges too. In the conversion of the conscious mind the day begins to break—the sunlight is upon the top of the conscious mind. But still the depths—the subconscious—are shrouded with mists and night. Then we pull back the curtains of mist and night from the subconscious and bid the light enter the depths. It does. "If

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... thine eye be single"—if your personality is under one control, the Holy Spirit—"thy whole body shall be full of light" (Matt. 6:22, K.J.V.)—the whole personality is alight with Him, with no part dark. Now you are really really redeemed, really converted.

CHAPTER XV

CONVERSION AND THE KINGDOM OF GOD

In the accounts of conversion recorded in this book, much of the emphasis has been placed upon what conversion saves from—self-centered preoccupation, fears, resentments, inner conflicts, pride, bad temper, lovelessness, guilts, impurity, emptiness, meaninglessness, frustrations, tensions, retreatism, materialism, greed. The list is a long one—and important. Conversion saves *from*. But perhaps the more important question is: What does conversion save *to*? If the emphasis in conversion is what it saves from, it will mean the backward look in religion. Jesus says: “No one who . . . looks back is fit for the kingdom of God.” Testimony meetings and “class meetings” of a few generations ago died of looking back, of recounting what took place in conversion in the past. Hal Luccock says that if he is killed on the streets by a car, they could probably say of him: “He died of looking the wrong way.” Many movements and individuals have died spiritually of looking the wrong way—

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looking backward. They proved they were not fit for the Kingdom of God.

If many have died spiritually from looking backward, just as many have died by looking forward to goals which were too small, too inadequate for life goals. Many are converted to church membership, which is good, but not good enough. They cannot let their full weight down on it, for if they do they will be disillusioned. For the church is made up of people just like themselves—streaky. So many wander from group to group looking for that perfect society. They will never find it, for the moment they get into it, it won't be perfect. When people say: "There are hypocrites in the church," my answer is: "Come on in, we can absorb one more." The church is the best society on earth, it contains the best life of humanity, but even so, if you let your full weight down on the church as your goal of life it will let you down. It isn't big enough or adequate enough to sustain the full weight of human self-commitment.

Others are converted to the hope of escaping hell and getting to heaven. This is involved in conversion, but if it is made the end in view of conversion it will also let you down. If you pursue heaven as the goal, it will elude you. If you should pursue heaven as a goal, when you got it you wouldn't be fit for it, for you had the wrong motive in trying to get it. Heaven is a by-product and not the goal or end.

Others still are converted to escape from unhappiness, from ill-health, from failure. These are included in conversion, but if the emphasis is on these, they too are inadequate as life goals, for if pursued for themselves they will slip through your grasping fingers. They are by-products of something bigger and greater. What is that bigger and greater?

In giving this bigger and greater Jesus Himself was never bigger and greater. With unerring insight He pointed to the Kingdom of God as that to which the converted are converted.

Conversion, the new birth, is set within the framework of the Kingdom of God.

Repentance was in that framework. "From that time Jesus began to preach, saying, 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!'" (Matt. 4:17.) You were not only to repent from—you were to repent to—to the Kingdom of God.

Conversion was in that framework, "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." (Matt. 18:3, K.J.V.) Here again you were not only to be converted from—you were converted to—to the Kingdom of God.

The new birth is in that framework. "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." (John 3:3, K.J.V.) Here the newly born are not merely born from the womb of the past, but are born into a new life and a new set of relationships in the Kingdom of God.

The Kingdom of God is the be-all and the end-all of repentance, conversion, and the new birth. That is of the utmost importance for they introduce you to the most amazing individual and social fact of the universe—the Kingdom of God.

What did Jesus mean by the Kingdom of God? He called it His gospel, "He went about . . . preaching the gospel of the kingdom." (Matt. 4:23.) It was the only thing He called His "gospel," and He commanded them to go and preach "the gospel of the kingdom." What did He mean by it? The Kingdom eludes definition, for the Kingdom is the Absolute Order breaking into the relative order, and we have to use relative words and phrases to describe the Absolute; which, of course, can't be done, not adequately. Jesus lets us look through the crevices of hints and words into that which defies description, "It is better for you to enter into life lame. . . . It is better for you to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye." (Mark 9:45, 47.) Here "life" and the "kingdom of God" are used synonymously. Life here points to eternal life—"enter

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into life." So Life and the Kingdom of God are one. The Kingdom of God is Life.

"The Kingdom of God" and "the Way" are also used synonymously. "And he . . . spoke boldly, arguing and pleading about the kingdom of God; but when some were stubborn and disbelieved, speaking evil of the Way before the congregation he withdrew" (Acts 19:8-9). Here "the kingdom of God" is "the Way." It is not "the way" with a small "w"—it is "the Way." It is not merely the way of salvation—it is that, but it doesn't say so—it says it is "the Way" unqualified. It is the Way to think and act and be in the individual and in the social, for God and man. It is the Way. There are just two things—the Way and not-the-Way. The Kingdom is always the Way, and everything against the Kingdom or outside the Kingdom is not-the-Way.

The Kingdom is God's Absolute Order confronting this relative order of man with an imperious, "Repent, be converted, be born again and through these accept and live according to the Kingdom."

Note that you do not "build the Kingdom," as the emphasis was a generation ago and still lingers on in anemic vocabularies—you "receive the Kingdom." "Let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken." (Heb. 12:28.) "Building the Kingdom" depicts the unsundered self thinking it can build the Kingdom by its own efforts. But "receiving the Kingdom" depicts the surrendered, receptive self with emptied hands accepting God's gift of grace, forgiveness, conversion, new birth, and—this is the point—introducing him to the most exciting fact of the universe, the Kingdom of God. There divine resources for human living are at the disposal of those who are humble enough to receive. "Blessed are the poor in spirit [humble and receptive enough to receive], for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." (Matt. 5:3.) "Theirs is the kingdom of heaven"—they do not only belong to the Kingdom of Heaven—the King-

dom of Heaven belongs to them. All its resources are at their disposal. It is behind them, backs them, and gives them cosmic approval. It brings all life into coherence, meaning, and goal.

Why have the totalitarianisms of Fascism, Nazism, and Communism arisen? I saw it in a flash when I was in Frankfurt, Germany, at the close of the war speaking on the Kingdom of God. On the front seats were prominent religious leaders, among them Dr. Martin Niemöller. They pounded the benches as I spoke. I wondered why. At the close they let me see:

You understand why the German people turned to Nazism. They wanted something that would totally command them and bring all life into coherence and goal. Life was at loose ends, compartmentalized. Nazism brought it together under an all-inclusive philosophy of life. For awhile it seemed to be It. But it was a false totalitarianism and let them down. They were really seeking for God's totalitarianism, the Kingdom of God, and didn't know it. They mistook Nazism for the real thing.

That same disillusionment is going to happen with another totalitarianism—Communism. They too are feeling after something that will bring all life into meaning and direct it toward great ends. But it is man's substitute for God's totalitarianism and will let men down. Disillusionment will set in—is setting in.

Psychologists tell us that there are three basic needs of the human personality—to belong, to have significance, to have reasonable security. Note the first basic need is "to belong." Feeling this necessity to belong, men fasten their loyalties to the wrong things—and these things let them down. Only when they fasten their supreme and absolute loyalties to the Kingdom of God do they feel with the businessman mentioned in this book, "This is It. My quest is over."

Since conversion introduces one to the Kingdom of God as an Absolute Order demanding a total obedience in the total life, individual and social, it determines the content of that con-

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version. The content of that conversion is personal. It attaches the individual to the personal Christ in supreme loyalty and love. He is the gateway into that Kingdom. The fact is that the Kingdom is embodied in Him. He made interchangeable "for my sake" and "for the Kingdom's sake." They were one. He said, "I am the Way." The Kingdom of God is called "the Way." Then things equal to the same things are equal to each other. He is the Kingdom personalized. So in conversion you are not attached primarily to an order, nor to an institution, nor to a movement, nor to a set of beliefs, nor to a code of action—you are primarily attached to a Person, and secondarily to these other things. "Called to belong to Jesus Christ." You are not called to get to heaven, to do good, or to be good—you are called to belong—to belong to Jesus Christ. The doing good, being good, and getting to heaven are the by-products of that belonging. The center of conversion is the belonging of a person to a Person.

Embodied in that Person is a Kingdom, so when you have relationships with that Person you have relationships with that Kingdom. But the nature of that Kingdom is social—the whole of life, individual and social, comes under its sway. It demands a total obedience in the total life. Entrance into the Kingdom is personal, but the nature of that Kingdom is social. So the content of conversion is by its very nature both individual and social, not now individual and now social—it is both at one and the same time. That is according to the very make-up of the individual as an individual. He is not now individual and now social. He is both at once. "To be is to be in relations." You cannot "be" without being "in relations." As man by his very nature is at once personal and social, so conversion by its very nature is both. The division between an individual and a social gospel is gone. To separate them is to separate what God joined in the Incarnation when the Word became flesh.

Since conversion converts to the Kingdom of God then the

area of operation for conversion is the whole of life—individual and social. Jesus gave the content of the Kingdom when He announced His manifesto in the little synagogue at Nazareth in the very beginning of His ministry, “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor [the economically disinherited]. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives [the socially and politically disinherited] and recovering of sight to the blind [the physically disinherited], to set at liberty those who are oppressed [“bruised”—K.J.V.—the morally and spiritually disinherited, those who have bruised themselves upon the moral and spiritual laws], to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord [or the Lord’s year of Jubilee—the Year of Jubilee in which all slaves were freed, all debts cancelled and all land redistributed and the nation began on a basis of a closer approximation to equality. This that Jesus announced was the Lord’s Year of Jubilee—a fresh world beginning].”

Here was a reconstruction that would remake the economic, the social and political, the physical, the moral and spiritual, and the collective. That was roughly the content of the Kingdom objective and hence the content of the conversion to that Kingdom. Since the Kingdom is the Way, unqualified, so conversion to the Kingdom is to be converted to conversion, unqualified. The whole of life is the area of its operation. Conversion, qualified, is conversion, canceled, to that extent.

A living, growing conversion is conversion taking in greater and greater areas of life. A conversion that isn’t growing is on its way out. It degenerates into dead forms and phrases out of which the content has dropped. Into that emptiness evil spirits come and take over. Conversion is perverted. A cross was being burned in front of a Negro home, and a little Jewish boy asked his father what it meant. The father slowly replied, “The Christians have lost their Way.” A burning cross is a cross burning with hate and prejudice—a perverted cross—instead of

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the cross of Jesus burning with love for enemies. The Christians who light it or approve of what lies back of it—race hate—have lost their Way.

This filling of conversion with a deeper and deeper content and taking in wider and wider areas is seen in this letter from Paul Santamurti of India. He was a high-caste Brahmin of South India and as a Hindu in his revolt against caste went down to the pariah (outcaste) section of Madras, had the available girls lined up, picked out the blackest of them all, and said, "I'll marry you." He did, and when she died he married her sister. The highest caste married not only the low caste, but the outcaste and the lowest of the outcaste. That was implementing his brotherhood principles with a vengeance. As an ardent nationalist he went to jail in the Gandhian movement for freedom. Mahatma Gandhi sent him a New Testament to read while in jail. Gandhi, who did not believe in conversion, was the instrument of Santamurti's conversion! He was converted reading the New Testament, and he was baptized. I sent him my books as they came out, and the last one *Christian Maturity* brought this comment:

The receipt of this book is a turning point in my inner life in Christ. It is a landmark. When I accepted the Lord Jesus as my Master and Leader I accepted Him because He gave me a definite authority to rebel against social wrongs and superstitious rituals of religion; He gave me authority for the liberty, equality, and brotherhood He placed within my heart. I accepted Him on account of His martyrdom and courage. I had very little idea of salvation and cared very little about it. Jesus Christ was the purest, greatest of world heroes and liberators, and I would march under His banner and under no other. Then after I came in contact with you and your books the place of the program of the Kingdom of God inaugurated by my Master gripped me as the campaign for the universal emancipation of mankind, solving all the problems of religious bigotry, social injustice, economic maladjustment, and

political obscurantism. When I wanted to give my whole heart to this program, I found it was impossible for anyone who did not lead the Christian life to carry out the Christian program. I dedicated myself afresh to give my entire loyalty to Christ and Christ alone as the Supreme Lord and Master, to struggle day by day to appropriate Christlikeness in character and to work for His Kingdom. I undertook the job without counting the cost or paying the price. All my efforts ended in failures—the greater the effort, the greater the failure. I was in despair. It was at that period that your books, *Abundant Living*, *The Way*, *The Way to Power and Poise*, *How to Be a Transformed Person*, *Growing Spiritually*, and *Mastery* showed me that I could get nothing by my own struggling, that I must surrender myself and my defects to Christ. I had learned the way of faith and prayer and struggle, but not of surrender. The way, though new to me, became perfectly familiar in a few months and to my great joy and relief I found it worked in all spheres, except at one point. It was not possible to keep my temper under control and avoid wishing or saying all manner of things against persons, who according to my judgment, had done wrong. The moment the thoughts of evil arose in my mind, or words of abuse came out of my mouth, I found I had gone against my pledge to Christ and I began repentance and prayer. It was not possible to love people who were scourges of mankind. So I thought. Your new book opened my eyes. I had not so far heard of agape love, though I was struggling hard to obey the M.R.A. program of absolute love. All the love I had was of the Eros type, and when men broke down, my love for them also broke down. So I have started surrendering my love also to Christ asking Him to transform all my Eros love into Agape love. Please pray for me.

Here is an enlightening story of the enlargement of the meaning of conversion: (1) Conversion meant conversion to a Leader in social reform. (2) Conversion to the Kingdom of God. (3) Conversion to surrender. (4) Conversion from Eros love to Agape love.

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Christ took him at the point of his highest interest—an ardent and sincere nationalist wanting to reform the social and political structure of his country. Jesus was a Leader in social reform, so he would be under His banner. Then he was led to the Kingdom which, while including social reform, was much more—it was a total way of life. He found he could not live this total way of life without self-surrender. The deepest thing in that self-surrender was the conversion of his basic love from Eros to Agape. Conversion had moved in from the periphery to the center. The center of conversion is the conversion of our love.

Those who live in the West would probably go the other way round. (1) The basic climate with us is individualism. So conversion would start with a desire for individual salvation from inner conflicts, guilts, fears, resentments, self-centered preoccupation. We desire peace, reconciliation, wholeness. (2) If the conversion runs true to form it should lead us to self-surrender. (3) At the center of that self-surrender is a conversion of our love—a conversion from Eros love which is acquisitive love to Agape love which is self-giving love. (4) This should lead us to conversion to the Kingdom of God which is a conversion to a total order, bringing the whole of life, individual and social, under a total way of life by a complete surrender and complete obedience to the Kingdom. “Seek ye first the kingdom of God . . . and all these things shall be added.” (Matt. 6:33 K.J.V.)

The guarantee is that if we seek first the Kingdom of God all the things that we need will be guaranteed to us.

The converted man who is converted to the Kingdom will take out of his earnings what he needs and hold the rest to be disposed of under the guidance of God for the needs of others. His own needs would be determined under some such principle as this: Each one has a right to as much of the material as will make him physically, mentally, and spiritually fit for the pur-

poses of the Kingdom of God. All else belongs to the needs of others.

The New Testament basis is "need"—not greed. "And my God will supply every need of yours." (Phil. 4:19.) "And distributed them to all, as any had need." (Acts 2:45.) "Your heavenly Father knows that you need them all." (Matt. 6:32.) "If any one says anything to you, you shall say, 'The Lord has need of them,' and he will send them immediately." (Matt. 21:3.) Need is the Christian basis.

The laymen—and the ministers—will go into the business or professional world with a sense of dedication—dedication to the Kingdom—and will be in full-time Christian service, using their business or profession as the instruments of demonstration of the Kingdom. Along with it they will feel they have a right to have their needs and the needs of their dependent loved ones met. Then they will be privileged to be the stewards of the remainder to distribute to meet the needs of others. That will bring all life into coherence and goal and give it a sense of mission. The false division between the secular and the sacred will be wiped out. The whole of life will be sacred, because used for sacred ends—Kingdom of God ends.

As they put their material goods and earnings at the disposal of the Kingdom of God, so they will put their time and talents and influence to that same Kingdom. This includes their personal witness.

Conversion is conversion to the Kingdom of God.

EPILOGUE

In speaking of the new birth and of conversion Jesus used a very decisive word in both cases—"Except." "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter the kingdom of heaven." Is this "except" too harsh, too narrow, too dogmatic, too imposed? Was He lifting up something out of the heart of reality? Was this "except" not imposed, but exposed? Is life saying the same thing? Yes—unequivocally, yes.

Remember what Stanley Hall, the psychologist, said: "If the church allows this [conversion] to fossilize then psychology when it becomes truly biological will preach it." That prophecy uttered a generation ago is now being fulfilled—psychology is preaching it—out of the deep, dark necessities of human nature is preaching it. Medicine is preaching it. The head of a medical college said to me, "If you ministers can't produce conversion, we doctors will have to, for life demands it."

That demand stretches from the topmost best that man can produce to the bottommost worst that sin can produce—all up and down the whole gamut of life, all human nature needs conversion—not some, *all*. There is no exception to this “except.”

The best that religion can produce apart from conversion is not good enough. Religion comes under this “except ye be converted.” St. Theresa for many years was an undistinguished nun, coldly and mechanically doing her round of duties and saying her prayers. One day she entered the chapel as she had done regularly for ten years past. This day, however, turned out to be different. As her eyes fell upon the cross, she really saw what was there and realized its meaning. For the first time she really understood the love of God in the suffering of Jesus and felt that that love was meant for her. She fell on her knees, surrendered all, and rose up to begin a new life. Her words from this time were living words. Where the statements of others fell upon unresponding hearts, the words of this nun quickened the souls of those who heard her. It was the Holy Spirit who awakened her to the meaning of the cross, and it was the Holy Spirit likewise who turned her ministry into a vibrant power-giving instrument of redemption. A devoted and dedicated nun needed conversion.

Devoted Christian ministers need the same. An earnest, but beaten and empty, young minister passed a church with this on the notice board, “Jesus Christ is in this place. Anything can happen here.” It struck him. He went in, knelt at the altar of prayer and surrendered his frustration and emptiness. Jesus Christ was in that place, and met him. He went out of there a new man and is now in a marvelously fruitful ministry.

This need of conversion extends from the topmost of human need to the bottommost. The head of Alcoholics Anonymous, which has been used to rescue tens of thousands from alcoholism, speaking before the American Psychiatric Association,

related that after a long period of drinking during which he was unable to quit, he thought: "If there be a God, He will show himself." "The result," he said, "was instant, electric, beyond description. The place lit up, blinding white. I knew only ecstasy and seemed on a mountain. A great wind blew, enveloping and permeating me. It was not of air, but of Spirit. Blazing came the tremendous thought, 'You are a free man.' Then ecstasy subsided. A great peace stole over me." He was a free man and then began the amazing work of freeing others.

I sat with a leading editor on the Pacific Coast, and when he told me he had been an alcoholic I could scarcely believe it. There were no marks of alcoholism upon him. "Yes," he said with quiet dignity, "alcohol got the better of me—gradually got me. I fought but I knew I was beaten. I went to an institution to see if science could help me. Into this institution they brought a man in an awful condition. I remarked to a doctor, 'That man is in an awful condition, isn't he?' 'Yes,' said the doctor, 'but within a year he'll be well. Within a year you won't be well.' It struck me like a blow. Those words ran through my mind like a funeral dirge. I walked out under the stars that night lonely and defeated. There I remembered what a leper said to Jesus: 'O Jesus, if thou wilt Thou canst make me clean.' The reply of Jesus was swift: 'I will, be thou clean.' So I lifted my hands to heaven and I cried: 'O Jesus, if thou wilt thou canst make me clean.' The answer was swift, 'I will, be thou clean.' That moment the power of alcohol was broken in my life. I haven't touched it since, haven't desired it since. It was gone." That great editor opened one drawer of his desk and showed me the notes he had for editorials and then opened the other and showed me a Bible. "That Book is the basis of my life and my editorials."

Nothing but conversion could have changed that nun and that young minister, both at the topmost of need, and nothing but conversion could have changed the head of Alcoholics

Anonymous and that editor, at the bottommost of need. Nothing but conversion can change the people in the churches or outside the churches who represent the in-between.

Conversion converts everything—from alcoholism to attitudes, and everything between. There is no substitute for conversion. If the Church loses its power to convert it has lost its right to be called Christian.

Into this jaded age, losing its nerve and turning to substitutes, there comes the good news of conversion from anything to Everything.

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